

**RETELLING THE STORY OF SHIM CHEONG:
REVISITING THE CONCEPT OF SACRIFICE AND THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS**

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presented to
the Faculty of
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Soomee Kim
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ABSTRACT

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This project attempts to formulate a valid narrative theology that serves the needs of Korean-American women. Because stories and storytelling are integral parts of our psychology, narrative theology offers a particularly powerful way of illustrating and teaching important Christian doctrine. It is important to note that stories should never be summarized or reduced to a “core meaning” when used for teaching or pastoral care and counseling, as this runs the risk of allowing the storyteller’s own views and prejudices to overpower the deeper meaning of the story itself. For this reason, all narrative theology should be based on the unabridged, unadulterated story in its purest form.

Theologies of the cross, by emphasizing the suffering and death of Jesus, run the risk of condoning abusive behavior and portray Jesus Christ as a figure who intentionally seeks suffering and death as part of the act of redemption, minimizing the responsibility of the repressive society that demanded his death. By emphasizing obedience to the Lord, these theologies can serve to maintain an oppressive status quo at the cost of innocent life. The project argues that a more healthy theology can be formulated based on the psychoanalytical theory of individuation, as formulated by Carl G. Jung.

By using the example of “The Story of Shim Cheong,” the dissertation shows how traditional, life-affirming tales can be distorted to serve the ends of a repressive patriarchal society. Sacrifice is not something we can demand a person to offer solely for the benefit of others. A true sacrifice can only come from someone who has reached the goal of individuation. It must be motivated by love and always serves to strengthen and enrich the giver. In that light, a new definition of sacrifice is formulated.

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INTRODUCTION

Stories are expressions of life in its most fundamental form – a person's experience, encompassing events great and small. This is why stories possess the power to transform life – either positively by empowering the listeners to hope beyond present reality, or negatively by confining the listeners through limitations and restrictions. Stories have been used as a means to enrich one's life or to translate cultural values and social mores. This translation comes on two different levels. On one level, the listener becomes familiar with the events and characters involved in the story itself. On a deeper level, the listener becomes familiar with the life values drawn from interpretation of the story. These associations are shaped by the standards (or ethos) of the community, which are shaped through its history and tradition, becoming powerful tools by which the listener interprets reality. For Christians, one beauty of storytelling is that it can open a space for the Holy Spirit to enter and join in the telling and listening of the story. Thus, in every storytelling, there is a storyteller, a listener, and the Holy Spirit acting as mediator between the two.

Stories, when told orally, often are summarized, abbreviated, or edited by the storyteller for the sake of time or clarity. They can also be abridged or simplified to accommodate the special needs of the listeners. These "rewrites" frequently eliminate important elements from the story, losing the message the original story tried to convey. In other cases, the narrator/editor/writer/playwright will consciously alter the story to fit his/her own purposes.

Narrative therapy takes the power of stories seriously and assists care seekers in reinterpreting the stories that have negatively shaped their lives. In her elaboration of narrative therapy theory, Christie Cozad Neuger notes:

[It] is based on postmodern/poststructuralist philosophies that include the assumption that our interpretation of reality *is* reality and that this reality is socially constructed. Realities...are organized and maintained by stories that are personal, familiar, and cultural.¹

In other words, a storyteller's interpretation of the story shapes the listeners' experience just as powerfully as the story itself. In its interpretation, however, it can often eliminate the space for the work of the Holy Spirit as a mediator. The following example is my own experience of the limitations inherent in interpretation.

In its traditional interpretation, the story of Shim Cheong has been highlighted as a story of sacrifice and a lesson in filial piety – so much so that this folk tale is often subtitled “Shim Cheong, the Filial Daughter,” “Shim Cheong, the Faithful Daughter” or “Shim Cheong, the Dutiful Daughter.” I was first introduced to the summarized children's version of the story in my fifth grade Korean Literature class. Here is the story as it was introduced to me in the fifth grade:

The Faithful Daughter Shim Cheong²

A long time ago, in the lands by the Yellow Sea, there lived a good-hearted girl named Shim Cheong. Her blind father raised her because her mother died *seven* days after she was born. Blind Shim carried his infant daughter from house to house in search of women to give her milk.

¹ Christie Cozad Neuger, Counseling Women: A Narrative, Pastoral Approach (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 43.

² Duance Vorhees, Mark Mueller, et al. The Faithful Daughter Shim Ch'ong (Elizabeth, N. J.; Seoul, Korea: Hollym, 1990). Reprinted by permission. Italics are my addition to the story for more details. Also I have altered the titles (king to emperor, queen to empress) to stay closer to the story I remember.

In spite of all her hardships, Cheong grew into a strong, healthy girl. Because Blind Shim was unable to work, Cheong had to do odd jobs in other people's homes from an early age so that she *could provide food for her father*. Cheong was not only strong and healthy; she was also a very diligent worker. Everyone in the village praised her skill. Housewives even argued with each other over who would be next to get her to sew for them. From morning until night, Cheong worked very hard for others so that she could provide food and clothes for her father.

When Cheong was fifteen years old, something happened that changed her life forever. She went to a village far from home *to meet Mrs. Jang, SeungSang, a widow of the Prime Minister*. *She was lonely and wanted to adopt Cheong as a daughter*. It was dark before she was able to leave for home. It was very late at night, and Blind Shim was very worried about Cheong.

"Where can the poor child be?" he asked himself.

Then he went outside to wait for her. He took his cane and fumbled across the bridge that led to the village. But he stumbled and fell "plop!" into the stream below.

"Save me! Save me!"

He shouted as he splashed about in the water. A Buddhist monk *from Mongunsa Temple* was passing by just at that moment. He ran to the stream and pulled Blind Shim out of the water.

"Thank you, thank you," Blind Shim said over and over, as the monk led him home.

"If you give Buddha 300 bags of rice," said the monk, "you will be able to see again."

At this, Blind Shim perked up and he stopped saying,

"Thank you, thank you."

Instead, he exclaimed,

"What's that you said? I could see again?"

Blind Shim was so excited at the possibility of seeing again that he made a promise without thinking.

"Oh, holy monk," he said, "I will. I will give you 300 bags of rice."

After the monk left, Blind Shim began to think about the promise that he had made. He began to worry.

"How can I keep such a promise?" he asked himself.

"Cheong has a hard time just getting enough food for the small meals a day. How can she possibly get 300 bags of rice?"

When Cheong finally got home, she saw her father's worried look.

"Father," she asked, "what happened today?"

Blind Shim told her how he worried about her, how he fell into the stream, and how the monk saved him. And he told her he promised to give the monk 300 bags of rice in order to see again. Cheong tried to make her father feel better.

"Don't worry," she said. "I will think of something."

For many days she thought about how she could ever get so many bags of rice. Then she heard that some sailors wanted to buy a young girl to sacrifice to the Dragon King *in the InDangSu Sea* so that they could make a safe journey. Cheong went to the sailors and told them her sad story. She said she would sell herself to them for 300 bags of rice. The sailors were very moved by her story, and very impressed by her good heartedness. They told her, "Dear maiden, don't worry about your father any longer. We will give you the 300 bags of rice you need and we will also give your father rice to eat every day."

She tried to comfort her weeping father, but she had to leave him to go far away with the sailors. At the seacoast they boarded a big ship and set sail for China. When the ship reached the middle of the InDangSu Sea, a strong wind suddenly began to blow and high waves rocked the ship. The frightened sailors prepared a table of food offerings for the Dragon King. They bowed toward the sea and prayed, crying out,

"Please. Please. We beg you, great Dragon King. Spare us. Save us from this storm and let us cross the ocean."

Cheong stood at the front of the boat. She looked one last time in the direction of her home and then threw herself into the angry wave. The sea suddenly became quiet. Relieved, but sad, the sailors sailed on.

Several days passed. Cheong had been asleep for a long time. She woke up and stretched her arms.

"Where am I?" she asked herself.

She was in a beautiful room, the likes of which she had never seen before. Outside the windows, fish were swimming. A beautiful maiden came in and said,

"Welcome to the Dragon Palace. The Dragon King brought you here when you sacrificed yourself to save the ship."

He knew how kindhearted Cheong was and how devoted she was to her father. So he put her inside the petals of a giant lotus flower and sent her back into the world.

Cheong slept peacefully inside the flower, gently rocking back and forth in the waves of the ocean. Some fishermen saw the giant flower floating in the sea.

"Oh!" they exclaimed,

"Such a beautiful and magnificent flower must have been sent from the Dragon King."

They pulled the lotus flower into their boat and took it to their *emperor*.

The *emperor* also thought the huge lotus bud was a great wonder. And then, all at once, the petals of the great lotus began to slowly open.

"What's this? Someone is coming out of the flower!"

In the middle of the lotus flower stood beautiful Cheong. Everyone in the palace was very surprised, the *emperor* most of all. The *emperor, who had just*

lost his empress to death, thought that the lotus maiden was so lovely that he asked her to become his *empress*.

Even after Cheong became the *empress*, she still thought often about her poor blind father. At such times she became unbearably sad. One day, when she was thinking of her home in the land by the Yellow Sea, the *emperor* asked her what was wrong.

"If something is troubling you," he said, "please tell me."

So Cheong told him all about her life and about her father, Blind Shim. After hearing Cheong's sad story, the *emperor* slapped his knee and said,

"I have it! We will hold a grand feast for all the blind people in the land. That way, we will be able to find your father."

The feast was held in the palace over many days. Every day, countless blind men were brought to the palace where they ate delicious food and were entertained by the court musicians. *Empress* Cheong looked for her father every day. She looked and looked, but he didn't come.

The feast was almost over, and Cheong had almost given up hope, when an old blind man in very ragged clothes stumbled in.

"Father!" cried out the beautiful *empress*, and she ran to the old man and hugged him. Blind Shim's face was clouded in confusion.

"Who is this girl who calls me father?" he asked.

When people told him it was the *empress*, he became even more confused.

"Father, it's me. Your daughter, Cheong," she said.

Her father was so surprised that his eyes opened in amazement. And he could see!

Blind Shim was not blind any more. He shouted, "Oh! I see you at last! I see my beautiful daughter at last!"

Shim Cheong and her father hugged each other tightly and cried tears of happiness.

**

After reading the story our teacher added her comments, saying that it was Shim Cheong's self-sacrifice that brought sight to her blind father and led them to live happily ever after. We were taught that it is right and proper for children to sacrifice themselves for the well-being of an individual member of the family or the whole family. Shim Cheong's willingness to sacrifice herself, up to and including her death by drowning, was

upheld as a virtue that all Korean daughters were expected to learn and imitate if necessary. Without being introduced to the whole story, children were taught to associate the story of Shim Cheong with the importance of sacrifice.

It is interesting to note, however, that while sacrifice is most often associated with female characters in the Korean folktales, male characters are typically protected from harm's way, often at the cost of a self-sacrificial sister or other female family member. Se-jeong Oh, professor of Korean literature at Busan University, points out this gender specific role of a sacrificial victim in traditional Korean literature:

For us [in Korean folk tales], male main characters seldom die tragically whether they appear in the fables or myths. On the other hand, female main characters experience a variety of persecutions and hardships if not tragic death. The sacrifice of female main characters continuously appears not only in the fables but also in other genres of literature.³

Stories and interpretations of stories are closely related to socio-cultural and religio-cultural context. Socio-cultural expectations are expressed in the stories, and stories generate religio-cultural motives. The gender specific role of the sacrificial victims in the stories is a serious problem in shaping gender differences and expectations. Praising the sacrificial heroine encourages girls and women to replicate the sacrificial role in their real life setting and allows boys and men to have a sense of entitlement to receive the benefits of the sacrifice of their mothers, aunts, sisters, and daughters.

The core of this project is a written plan for a three-day retreat, which is a major portion of chapter 6. As the title of the retreat ("Retelling the story of Shim Cheong")

³ Se-jeong Oh, "Heesang Gisa eui Gujo wa Inmul Youngu" (The Study on the Structure and Character of the Sacrifice-Story), U-moonYon-goo (Study of Language and Literature). 30, no. 4 (winter 2002): 123.

indicates, the main purpose of the retreat is to retell the story in its entirety, giving the participants a chance to re-form any feelings associated with the story by reexamining the backgrounds and circumstances in which the story was introduced to us in our childhood and by re-listening to the story in its most original form. The idea of the project was born from two experiences that came simultaneously as major frustrations in my personal and professional life.

Several years ago, I was invited to lead a spiritual retreat for a women's group of the local church I was pastoring, which was a predominantly white Anglo congregation. As I was studying Carl G. Jung's theories of shadow and individuation with Professor Kathleen Greider at Claremont School of Theology and reading books on the subject⁴, I began to work on my own shadow through meditation, journaling, and spiritual direction, and saw the value of embracing the shadows in my life. I started to formulate the ideas into a retreat form and created a three-day retreat plan with the title "Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall." There were many positive responses from those women who participated in the retreat, and I was invited to lead other women's groups not only in the United Methodist Churches, but also from other denominations. The retreats were mostly very successful, and some women even contacted me after the retreats to tell me how it was a turning point in their life. Many expressed that they were now more accepting of the

⁴ The books read around this time were Jeremiah Abrams and Connie Zweig, eds., Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1991); and Connie Zweig and Steve Wolf, Romancing the Shadow: Illuminating the Dark Side of the Soul (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997).

shadow sides of their life, and some were paying more attention to their formerly neglected creative side. These were mostly white Anglo women.

Then I was invited to lead a retreat for Korean-American women in Los Angeles. I used the same material translated into Korean, and it was (in my evaluation) an utter failure. There was no connection between the participants and myself, and, even though it was in Korean language, I realized that most of the material I had introduced was not relevant for Korean-American women.

About this time, I was also discovering the power of stories through a series of classes I took with Professor Frank Rogers at CST. Through the classes and readings I made a discovery that there are very powerful connections between a story I heard as a child (the story of Shim Cheong), its message of sacrifice, and some elements of the shadow I was facing. I began my research and discovered the full version of the story of Shim Cheong. When I read the story in its entirety, I realized I had been cheated (or rather, the story itself had been cheated), by my elementary school teacher, who made it sound as if the story only had only one message: that of filial piety.

As I was feeling the frustrations from these two “discoveries,” I had a series of dreams. In the dreams I was in a big mansion. In the first dream I was in a big hall on the main floor of the mansion, where there was an art class. The teacher, a white Anglo female, told us to paint a picture of a model we would be given individually, and I was given a corpse of a white male. I woke up feeling frustrated. My subsequent dreams were mostly in the same mansion, on different floors (sometimes in the basement, other times in the attic) trying to locate either my canvas that I was working on or the model I

had misplaced. Often my searches were accompanied by helpers, who presented themselves as white males or white females. Sometimes I found the model rolled up in a piece of carpet stashed away in a fireplace, or the canvas hidden in the attic. In the last dream of the series, I found my canvas, put in on the easel, found the model, put it on a table that looked like an altar, and told myself, “Even though the model is dead, I can paint a rainbow using this model.” Then I recited the last verse of Psalm 51: “The bulls will be offered on your altar.”

During a spiritual direction session, I realized that the dream was to be my D. Min. project. I didn’t know exactly how it was going to play out, though. In one of my sessions with Professor Greider, I told her I had an idea about a book, which would have to be my second writing since I had to finish writing my D. Min. project first. As I described the idea of this second writing project, she suggested that I could combine the two ideas. A light bulb went on in my head. I could design a retreat using the entire story of Shim Cheong, with which most Koreans and Korean-Americans are familiar. In retrospect, I realized the story’s images and symbolisms were perfect for shadow work. I simply had not made the connection.

The context of the project is the prevalence of a Korean folktale, the story of Shim Cheong, which carries with it problematic interpretations. This project is an attempt to address the misuse of the story of Shim Cheong that promotes inappropriate self-sacrifice by Korean and Korean-American Christian women. The project retells the story of Shim Cheong in its full version with its layers and layers of symbolism. By retelling the story,

the project challenges the narrow traditional interpretation of the story and its negative effects on Korean and Korean-American female Christians.

The project also challenges the gender distinctions and traditional male privilege in Korean culture by inviting people of both genders to use the story of Shim Cheong as an instrument to teach the concept of God's love for all of humanity. It is my hope that as we examine the story of Shim Cheong in relationship to the concepts of shadow and individuation as defined by Carl G. Jung to elaborate the process of self-discovery and the believer's journey to Christian perfection, Korean and Korean-American women will have insights and be given tools to name the restrictions they have experienced while growing up in this culture, which will eventually lead us to name the collective shadows of our society.

Finally, the project demonstrates to Christian educators, pastoral caregivers, and preachers the power of storytelling as an instrument for teaching positive relationships between human beings and with God. As Anderson and Foley affirm, "[stories] can become life-giving when they point beyond themselves to larger and transcendent narratives: when they open themselves to the all-embracing story of God."⁵

The first five chapters of this thesis are devoted to providing the theoretical and theological background and the analytical material behind the planning of the retreat. Therefore it can be used to prepare retreat leaders as they familiarize themselves with the basic assumptions of the content of the retreat. In Chapter 1, I introduce the fundamentals of narrative theology and add my rationale on why stories (especially

⁵ Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 38.

folktales) are great tools for religious education and pastoral care and counseling. I also highlight the dangers of using stories to convey a specific agenda and encourage leaders to tell stories as they are in their entirety, even though some parts of the stories may not be so clearly apprehended by some listeners.

Chapter 2 focuses on the concepts of Carl G. Jung, particularly his theories of the shadow and individuation. As my dream indicated in the form of a white male corpse, Carl Jung is limited in his scope, being a white male who lived and studied in the early part of the twentieth century. The voice of Demaris S. Wehr⁶ proves helpful in providing a feminist perspective on the subject.

Chapter 3 is devoted to a discussion of various theologies of the cross and their interpretations. The misguided message of self-sacrifice in the story of Shim Cheong is complicated further for Christians by atonement theologies that glorify the death of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice we should imitate if we are to become like Christ. Utilizing the criticism of two female theologians, Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker⁷ and an Asian voice of C. S. Song,⁸ I offer a resolution on how to interpret the death of Jesus Christ and the symbol of the cross as Christians, especially for Korean-American women who have been persuaded to sacrifice themselves for others' needs.

Chapter 4 is devoted to a translation of the tale of Shim Cheong in its unabridged form. This is followed by Chapter 5, in which we will explore the story of Shim Cheong

⁶ Demaris S. Wehr, Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

⁷ Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

⁸ C. S. Song, Jesus, the Crucified People (New York: Crossroad, 1990).

using the tools and lenses discussed in the previous three chapters. The story is full of images and symbolism which provide rich resources for shadow work. The story is also full of images and symbols that can be interpreted as parallel signs to life, death, and resurrection of Jesus from the Bible. In this project, however, the focus of the comparison between Cheong and Jesus will be on those elements that restricted Shim Cheong from living a full life.

The main part of Chapter 6 is the three-day retreat plan with Korean and Korean-American women as the main subjects who have appropriated the messages of the patriarchal society as the norms for their lives, therefore limiting their interpretation of the theology of the cross to that of self-sacrificing savior. The purpose of the retreat is to give permission to these women to denounce patriarchal norms and gain power and confidence to choose the liberating power of God's love. Due to the unavailability of a group of Korean-American women who could get away for a three-day retreat, I had to summarize the plan and lead a one-day retreat. The latter portion of Chapter 6 analyzes the results of this mini-retreat.⁹

⁹ It is ironic to note that these restrictions caused me to duplicate exactly the main problems touched upon by this project, namely summarizing and minimizing. In a different arena (storytelling as compared to retreat leading) I repeated exactly the same practice of not presenting the whole material.

CHAPTER 1

The Power of Story

Introduction

Since the beginning of recorded history, human beings have found countless ways to communicate, but none is more powerful or enduring than that of storytelling. It is certainly true that many messages are far richer when conveyed through stories: in fact, many messages can only be effectively conveyed through storytelling, and no other medium. Christian theology, for example, falls flat when described outside the context of the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For as long as human beings learned to communicate, stories in various forms have been created, told, and retold.¹⁰ In fact, the power of story is so profound that John Navone, one of the pioneers in theology of story, describes the human being as a “story-telling and story-listening animal.”¹¹

I personally experienced the power of storytelling as special form of communication some time ago. I was sharing a cup of tea with a young woman who was not quite sure whether she was feeling a “Call” to ministry. Instead of asking me to describe what a “Call” is like, she asked me to tell the stories that led to my current life’s path as a clergy woman in the United Methodist Church. I began with the experiences that helped me to sort out my vocational direction, and then went on to tell the story of the sequence of the

¹⁰ Susan M. Shaw assumes that story emerged almost simultaneously with language itself. Susan M. Shaw, “A Brief History of Storytelling,” in Storytelling in Religious Education (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1999), 34-51.

¹¹ John Navone, Towards a Theology of Story (Slough, Eng.: St. Paul, 1977), 25.

events that led me to study at Claremont School of Theology. I also shared the story of why I first chose Religious Education as a major, then the story of how I changed to the Master of Divinity program. Finally, I told stories of the challenges and joys I experienced through the process of ordination.

After listening to these stories attentively for about two hours, this young woman finally said, "You know, I think really I do have a Call to ministry." She then asked me to tell her the stories of challenges I had faced as a Korean-American, and especially as a woman in ministry. I told her the stories of several incidents during my ministry that discouraged me, and how I overcame these frustrations and challenges. I also told her some of my success stories, stories of how God blessed my life, and why my life is richer now because I answered the Call to serve the people as their pastor. After listening to these stories for about an hour and a half she finally said, "I think I'm ready to go forward with this Call to ministry."

This experience proved to me the power of storytelling in religious education and pastoral care and counseling. It is interesting to note, first of all, that this woman asked me to tell her stories of my experience. She didn't ask me to teach her what a Call to ministry is like, nor did she ask me to counsel her on her vocational choices. As she listened to my stories, she sorted out the necessary information she was looking for and made a decisive conclusion about her situation.

I can list three different ways the story telling taught her and counseled her. First, my stories of the Call helped this young woman to recognize that what she was experiencing was indeed a Call to ministry. Second, the stories of my challenges and successes helped

her to have a glimpse of what it meant to answer the Call and follow the path as an ordained leader of a Christian church at this time in history. Finally, these stories assisted her in making her own decision to answer her own Call to ministry.

Granted, there were other ways I could have helped this young woman to achieve these goals. For example, I could have told her the general formula of Calls to ministry. I could have lectured her on the nature of faith and what it means to have trust in God, be a disciple of Christ, and follow the directions from the Holy Spirit. But that is not what this young woman wanted. She wanted to hear my stories, and in listening to these stories, she was able to clarify and validate her own experiences and conjure up the courage to make her own decision. I am hopeful that the stories I have shared will also serve as a reminder that others have experienced the challenges and struggles that she has faced, and that she will be able to reach out for help when she needs encouragement, and have confidence that she is not alone in following the Call to ministry.

Shaw reiterates what I have recognized in this experience:

Identification with a story allows learners to experience the specifics of the story vicariously. This experience creates space for learners to learn from the story's experience as if they had actually participated in it – which they have, imaginatively, through the story. Stories, therefore, are an experiential learning process, involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral modes of learning, so that learners participate in stories, reflect on them, understand them, create meaning of them, and act on them. In so doing, learners reorder their own experiences – cognitive, affective, and behavioral –into meaningful patterns and responses.¹²

In stories we find definitions and meanings for those parts of our lives that sometimes defy easy expression in mere words. With stories, we uncover the meaning of our

¹² Shaw, 54.

personal experiences. Through stories, we discover channels to express ourselves to others. Stanley Hauerwas quotes Sallie TeSelle on our inseparable relationship with stories: “(A)ny story is about ourselves, and a *good* story is good precisely because somehow it rings true to human life” (original emphasis).¹³ John Navone states:

We live on stories; we shape our lives through stories, mastering the complexity of our experience through the dynamic of our structured knowing, a whole whose parts involve many distinct and irreducible activities: seeing, understanding, conceiving, reflecting, weighing the evidence, judging.¹⁴

Susan M. Shaw further describes the reciprocal nature of our experiences and stories we create, tell, and retell:

Stories are acts of experience, expression, and recognition. Narrative begins in experience. People experience their lives narratively and live out narratives they construct. Experience is the raw material of story. From experience, storytellers construct narratives – they imbue events with meaning. The resultant story then becomes a cognitive, affective, and behavioral experience for those who hear it as they recognize themselves in the story. In other words, storytellers render their experience in the story, and, if the story is true to human experience, learners find themselves participating in the story as well.¹⁵

The strength of experiential knowledge comes in the power of identification. As the young woman from my previous example identified herself in the choices I had made and vicariously experienced the life I had led, she was able to make decisions that would allow herself to engage in a similar life style. This identification and experiential engagement spoke to her as loudly and clearly as the most carefully constructed logical

¹³ Sallie TeSelle, “The experience of Coming to Belief,” *Theology Today*, 32, no. 2 (July 1975): 159-60, Cited by Stanley Hauerwas, “Story and Theology,” *Religion in Life* 45 (Autumn 1976): 339.

¹⁴ Navone, 18.

¹⁵ Shaw, 53.

argument. Stories have a capacity to teach and reassure that goes far beyond any other methods of communication.

In this chapter, I will focus on the power of stories as I describe the nature of narrative theology. I will go on to talk about the nature of folktales and their place in narrative theology. Next, I will discuss how stories can be used as effective tools for religious education and pastoral care and counseling. Having established the power of stories, I will then relate how often stories are regrettably abused as tools of psychological and social oppression.

For the purpose of this project, I will define story as “an oral or written narrative that includes the elements of characters, setting, conflict, plot, and meaning.” Quoting Flannery O’Connor, Shaw explains what functions characters and action (experience)¹⁶ have in a story.

[Characters] are shown through action [*experience*], and action [*experience*] is controlled through characters. This results in meaning that derives from the whole presented experience. Thus characters and action [*experience*] interact within a story to create meaning, which is the story itself. In other words, character, action [*experience*], and meaning are inseparably bound up together in a story.¹⁷

¹⁶ Shaw uses the term “action” to describe how setting, conflict, and plot are put together. However, I prefer the term “experience.” The term “action” implies a subjective intention, an event that takes place because a character wills it to occur. “Experience,” on the other hand, includes a wide variety of events that take place despite a character’s personal desires. I will use the term “experience” from this point forward to refer both to events that take place as a result of positive action from a character, and to those events that take place irrespective of a character’s desires.

¹⁷ Shaw, 55, citing Flannery O’Connor, *Mystery and Manners*, ed Sally Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 90. Additions in italics are mine.

A story, therefore, joins experiences in life with characters and presents them in meaningful ways that resonate in people who read or listen as they try to understand life and make meaning from their experiences.

One final caveat: when it comes to the study of story, many scholars attempt to distill a story down to its “core meaning,” a single statement which, they claim, expresses the truth at the core of the narrative. However, Shaw insists that stories cannot be reduced to one thematic statement about its meaning because the story itself is the meaning. Every word, every plot, every character and event is necessary to say what the story needs to say. Stanley Hauerwas asserts, “[S]tories do not illustrate a meaning, they do not symbolize a meaning, but rather the meaning is embodied in the form of the story itself.”¹⁸ Furthermore, attempting to distill a story down to a single thematic statement runs the risk that the story itself will be distorted by the personal biases of the storyteller into a subjective commentary with potentially abusive results. Further elaboration of the danger of reducing a story into a single thematic statement (rather than viewing the story in totality as an art form that has a meaning of its own) will be discussed below.

Narrative Theology

Given the experiential nature of stories and the narrative qualities of human experiences, it is only natural that stories have become one of the proper means of developing theology. The sharing of stories of faith is as old as the first questions asked about God, nature, or life itself. Wherever a community gathers, stories are shared of

¹⁸ Hauerwas, 344.

personal experiences of God, insights into the experience of God, and the meaning of life itself.

The power of storytelling can also be found in religious education. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is full of stories of how God interacted with people. Every pastor knows to include stories in their sermons as illustrations of salient points. Walk into almost any Sunday school classroom in almost any church in the world, and you will find Sunday school teachers using stories to convey the basic nature of God's message of love. However, the use of storytelling for religious education did not receive a systematic treatment until the early 1960s, when narrative theology, a movement to use traditional stories as a primary means to teach Christian theology, swept through the Western theological world.¹⁹ At its heart, narrative theology affirms that stories have a deeper role in religious education than illustrating sermons, decorating Sunday school classrooms, or making the Bible more entertaining. George W. Stroup cautions us, however, that narrative theology is not simply a matter of storytelling. He characterizes narrative theology as follows:

Narrative theology does recognize... that Christian faith is rooted in particular historical events which are recounted in the narratives of Christian Scripture and tradition, that these historical narratives are the basis of Christian affirmations about the nature of God and the reality of grace, and that these historical narratives and the faith they spawn are redemptive when they are appropriated at the level of personal identity and existence.²⁰

¹⁹ For contextual background of the birth of narrative theology, read chapter 2 of Story Theology by Terrence W. Tilley (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1985).

²⁰ George W. Stroup, The Promise of Narrative Theology (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1981), 17.

Terrence W. Tilley, in his book Story Theology, states that, “[Stories] provide the central and distinctive structure and content of Christian faith.”²¹ Tilley acknowledges that stories of real people of faith can teach Christian theology far more effectively than mere doctrine or dogma. The stories he refers to in the statement above include not only biblical stories, but also stories of saints, both canonized and un-canonized, and stories of contemporary Christians.²² The stories of faithful Christians and how they followed Jesus Christ and how they lived out the call of discipleship become lived doctrines that speak more deeply than any mere dogma or creed. Tilley affirms, “[The] *virtue* of narrative theology is that it is deeply *in touch with* the whole Christian tradition, not just the propositions of the theologians....”²³ The validity of narrative theology can be seen in the fact that the majority of the messages of Christian faith takes the form of narrative, as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. One needs look no farther than the example of Jesus himself. From the events surrounding his birth to his death and resurrection, almost every important lesson Jesus taught either comes from the story of his life or takes the form of a parable told to his students.

I have already emphasized the fact that human experience has a narrative form. Navone further ascertains the narrative quality of religious experience: “Narrative consciousness is ultimately rooted in the ontological power of being or Being-itself (God). Our participation in this power grounds out the ineluctable need to order the

²¹ Tilley, xvii.

²² While Stroup lists simply Christian Scripture and tradition as the sources of narratives, Tilley adds the stories of contemporary Christians.

²³ Tilley, 164, emphasis added.

world through stories.”²⁴ In its essence, therefore, stories are an indispensable medium in understanding God and self. Hauerwas puts it simply: “A story function[s] [as] a proper name and vice versa.”²⁵ We fail to describe fully when we try simply to explain who God is, or even who someone is. By telling and listening to stories of how God relates to people, however, we can describe aspects of God properly and truthfully. Hauerwas states, “If we are to learn to speak of God, we must learn to speak of [God] in stories.”²⁶

The story that is necessary to know God is the story that is also necessary to know the self, but such knowing is not the passive accommodation to an external object. Rather such a knowing is more like a skill that gives us the ability to know the world as it is and should be – it is a knowing that changes the self.²⁷

Stories are a great medium to understanding who we are and who God is, as well as how God works in our lives and in the world. As we rarely have direct face-to-face access to God, the closest way to learn of God and know God is through reading and listening to the stories of people who have encountered God. In their stories, we can find glimpses of the nature of God and recognize how God also works in our lives. And as we understand more and more the nature of God, we have better understanding of ourselves. Stroup simply states, “All true self-knowledge requires knowledge of God, but knowledge of God is sterile and ‘academic’ unless it discloses true knowledge of the self.”²⁸

²⁴ Navone, 40.

²⁵ Hauerwas, 347.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., 349.

²⁸ Stroup, 19.

Stroup admonishes us against considering narratives as a means to introduce doctrinal theology or debating whether theology should assume the form of narrative. Rather, he draws our attention to the strength of narrative theology as we face crises in Christian identity and confusion in Christian theology about the meaning of revelation. He strongly asserts, "Narrative is an important theological category because it is essential for understanding human identity and what happens to the identity of persons in that process Christians describe by means of the doctrine of revelation."²⁹ Quoting Stephen Crites' article "The Narrative Quality of Experience," Stroup declares, "[One] of the conditions for being human is the possession of the capacity for having a history, and 'that the formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative.'"³⁰ He goes on to discuss "sacred stories" in which gods are celebrated, and through which human beings' sense of self and world is created. Sacred stories are never directly told because "they shape consciousness rather than being an object of consciousness."³¹ Therefore, Christian narratives become the tools to understand and interpret what Christians mean by divine revelation and confession of faith. Christian narrative appropriates Christian faith and reconstructs our personal and communal identity as Christians. This is of uttermost importance, because genuine learning in Christian tradition is not limited to acquiring knowledge of its scripture, history, or tradition. Instead, a test of authentic

²⁹ Ibid., 88-89.

³⁰ Ibid., 75-76, citing Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 39, no. 3 (September 1971): 291.

³¹ Stroup, 76.

Christian understanding of its theology comes in one's ability to reinterpret personal and social existence and appropriation of Christian faith.³² Thus, Stroup defines revelation as "that event in which a person or a community encounters what is ultimately real and interprets that encounter by means of the narratives of the Christian community,"³³ and that Christian faith is "the individual's decision to see and live in the world by means of that narrative."³⁴ The conversion happens when one decides to assume the community's faith and narratives as one's own.³⁵ Therefore all we do as Christians, and how we interpret our identities as Christians, should happen within the context of the Christian narrative, which requires constant interpretation and reinterpretation in appropriating present context and understanding future hope.

Sharing and listening to the stories of people who have different experiences of God not only gives us better glimpses of how God works in us and with us, but also helps us to live out the call of Christian discipleship. Susan M. Shaw further affirms:

Story is not the only appropriate means of theological reflection, but it is a valuable and important one. Christian theological reflection implies not only the formulation and exploration of concepts but also the implementation of Christian conviction in lived Christian faith. Narrative helps people both reflect on religious experience and live out religious truths in their own lived stories.³⁶

³² Ibid., 70-97.

³³ Ibid., 174.

³⁴ Ibid., 174-75.

³⁵ Ibid., 175.

³⁶ Shaw, 82.

The engaging nature of religious conviction further addresses the appropriateness of narrative theology, for an authentic religious experience requires full immersion into and then complete emergence from the theology. Hauerwas testifies:

Stories.... are not told to explain as a theory explains, but to involve the agent in a way of life. A theory is meant to help you know the world without changing the world or yourself, a story is to help you deal with the world by changing it through changing yourself.³⁷

Stories are a powerful tool for human beings to learn about the truths of their lives not merely by their description of the world, but by their creation of these experiences. Susan Shaw emphasizes that story both creates and explains experience, and that what is learned in story is far closer to wisdom, understanding, or lived truth, than what is learned through rote memorization or other means.³⁸

Folktales and Narrative Theology

There are many forms of stories that describe human life and how we relate to God. One such genre, and the one I am focusing on in this project, is folktale. Shaw defines folktales as “traditional stories that are passed orally from generation to generation.”³⁹ She notes a number of subgenres, such as fairytales, fables, legends, myths, and other forms of tales.⁴⁰ Out of all these subgenres, I would like to put fairytales and folktales in

³⁷ Hauerwas, 341.

³⁸ Shaw, 56.

³⁹ Ibid, 171.

⁴⁰ In the present project the terms folktales and fairytales are generally used interchangeably. This can be a bit confusing, because the term folktale has two different meanings. In its bigger meaning, the term folktale includes all those subgenres mentioned above, however “folktale” is also often used to describe fairytales specifically related to a certain culture and tradition. It is the second definition I am referring to when I use the term “folktale” to describe fairytales from Korean and Chinese culture. This choice came

one category against others, for these two types of stories have been passed down from generation to generation for their own sakes (as stories), while fables have the purpose of teaching, and legends are related to stories of heroes and heroines that a particular community wants to preserve.

Shaw lists the many possible benefits of studying folktales according to the different approaches we take in studying and interpreting them:

Literary scholars explore the history, structure, style, and meanings of folktales. Folklorists seek traces of old customs and rites and explore the place of the tales in their community of origin. Sociologists examine folktales as expressions of social contexts. Historians of religion look to folktales as evidence of humans' connection to the divine, and psychologists analyze folktales as expressions of human development.⁴¹

There are two theories that explain the origins of folktales, the monogenesis theory and the polygenesis theory. The monogenesis theory asserts that each story has a single origin from which it was disseminated throughout the world, while the polygenesis theory insists that similar stories emerge independently throughout the world. The polygenesis theory assumes that there are fundamental similarities in the human psyche and common human experiences regardless of location and time in history.⁴² Either theory affirms my belief that through careful and thorough study, folktales will give

from deeply rooted experiences in my native language, Korean. Growing up in Korea I heard two different terms used for children's stories: Junrae Donghwa (folktale) was used for traditional Korean stories, while Woekook Donghwa (foreign story) was used to describe stories from other cultures, mostly Western countries. Therefore, it is important for me to separate stories of my own culture from the stories of Western cultures. Dr. C. S. Song uses the term folktales exclusively when referring to stories from his own Chinese culture.

⁴¹ Ibid., 172 – 73.

⁴² Ibid., 172.

insights to a group of people regarding their perspective of the world and their common yearning for life.

The purpose of theology and theologizing includes not only our understanding of God and how God functions in our life, but also the practical understanding of theology. I will now turn to two areas where we can utilize theology - Christian education and pastoral care and counseling - and show how story and narrative theology can be used in both fields.

Narrative Theology in Christian Education

The purpose of Christian education is not only sharing information or learning facts about the Bible, but also shaping character and motivating religious living. Merely acquiring information about the moral and ethical formulation of personal character does not bring about religious living. Beyond the rational and moral formulations of human beings, there is our yearning to experience the mystery of God, and it is through those unexplainable experiences that we are transformed and regenerated. Therefore, the very nature of story and its multi-faceted functions make it an effective tool in Christian education. Shaw states:

Because stories are such an integral part of human experience and identity, storytelling in religious instruction can engage learners in cognitive, affective, and behavioral modes of learning that can lead to powerful, life-changing learning outcomes.⁴³

Shaw goes on to affirm that “narrative experiences can be shaped to introduce information, encourage analysis, engage emotions, invite participation, and model

⁴³ Shaw, x.

behavioral change.”⁴⁴ Even those who resist dogma or children, who have a limited intellectual capacity to understand difficult theological terms and concepts, can come to understand deeper messages through stories. Shaw explains: “Because stories are not primarily cognitive, they can often break free of intellectual constraints and dogmatic barriers to engage learners in experiences and perspectives far different from their own.”⁴⁵ Jerry Stone argues that the narrative approach to Christian education, “bring[s] out the internal connections between the traditional Christian message, and the life stories and felt experiences of present day teachers and students living in their community context.”⁴⁶ He further elaborates:

[Narrative] theology can help religious education bring to the surface the multilayered dimensions of religious consciousness and it can do this through the more literary and poetic expressions of the faith that offer a kind of satisfying ‘soul food’ that many people hunger for.⁴⁷

A praxis perspective of religious education includes a social context in which the community’s stories support the interplay of canonical and life stories. Stone defines praxis as “reflective action informed by the practical knowledge and skill learned within a tradition that enabled a person to transform a tradition’s meaning into the present context.”⁴⁸ A praxis perspective of religious education stresses the importance of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁶ Jerry H. Stone, “Narrative Theology and Religious Education,” in Theologies of Religious Education, ed. Randolph Crump Miller (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1995), 284.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 265.

canonical stories and community stories as “inspirational sources of virtue to enlarge our own life stories.”⁴⁹ By finding internal connections among the three (canonical stories, life stories, and community stories) we reenact these heroic stories in our own lives. Stone differentiates reenactment from mimicking, in that reenactment happens when we “interpret the meaning of [the lives of the heroes] for our lives and apply that meaning in ways relevant to our particular situations.”⁵⁰

Of course, simply knowing the content of the stories doesn’t ensure that the learners will gain practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is added in the life of the learner as he/she participates in the tradition of the faithful. For stories to be effective in religious education, the learner has to reenact the story in his/her own life. When one reenacts these stories, one finds “internal connections among the biographical stories [canonical, or folktales, etc.] and [his/her] own life and community stories.”⁵¹ Stone states, “A major task of religious education is to guide the process of relating stories.”⁵²

Stone further guides Christian educators with important insights in juxtaposing biblical stories with other stories: “The purpose is never just to compare and contrast the texts, rather, it is to explore the inner currents of our own life stories in relation to the worlds depicted in the biblical stories and the novels.”⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid., 266.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 268 – 69.

⁵¹ Ibid., 269.

⁵² Ibid., 273.

⁵³ Ibid., 278.

I have discussed in the Introduction the strong connections folktales have with the community of their origin in their very nature of creation. Folktales, therefore, play a significant role in a praxis perspective on Christian education. In chapter 8 of her book, Storytelling in Religious Education, under the subtitle of “Fairy Tales,” Shaw describes essential roles fairytales play in religious education in each stage of development across the various life stages, and how fairytales provide effective messages in various levels of religious education: cognitive, affective, and lifestyle domains.⁵⁴ Shaw elaborates:

[Folktales] provide frameworks for experiencing, understanding, and interpreting the world. Stories stimulate the imagination and encourage creativity. Even more specifically, stories play a role in a variety of educational tasks from language acquisition to critical thinking to lifestyle choices.⁵⁵

For young children, fairytales touch at an emotional level and trigger the imagination before they are able to analyze or have cognitive understanding of any deeper meanings behind the stories. When young children can identify their own life’s challenges and struggles in these fairytales, they can externalize their anxiety and gain comfort in knowing that distress is a normal and common part of the life experience, whether in fairytale lands or in their own world. Shaw explains, “Through their experience in fairies, children can distance themselves from the content of the unconscious and experience it as something external in order to gain control over it.”⁵⁶ She encourages religious educators to use fairytales in both formal settings when they need to address

⁵⁴ For further detailed discussion, read Shaw, 171-97.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁶ Shaw, 179.

specific issues (for example, violence or abandonment), or in informal settings as mere storytelling, so they will be stored in the child's memory until the right moment, when they need some assurance to fall back on. Bruno Bettelheim, in his book The Uses of Enchantment, echoes Shaw's claim:

Listening to a fairy tale and taking in the images if present may be compared to a scattering of seeds, only some of which will be implanted in the mind of the child. Some of these will be working on his conscious mind right away; others will stimulate processes in his unconscious. Still others will need to rest for a long time until the child's mind has reached a state suitable for their germination, and many will never take root at all. But those seeds which have fallen on the right soil will grow into beautiful flowers and sturdy trees – that is, give validity to important feelings, promote insights, nourish hopes, reduce anxieties – and in doing so enrich the child's life at the moment and forever after. Telling a fairy tale with a particular purpose other than that of enriching the child's experience turns the fairy story into a cautionary tale, a fable, or some other didactic experience which at best speaks to the child's conscious mind, while reaching the child's unconscious directly also is one of the greatest merits of this literature.⁵⁷

Stories, however, are not reserved only for young children. For adolescents, fairytales can be used in the area of identity development. As adolescents struggle to make moral and ethical choices in life and begin to create their identity and develop a sense of self, fairytales give hope for a positive future outcome to these struggles. For young adults, fairytales of heroes and heroines finding their true love are especially effective in religious education, for they are in the stage of development that seeks intimacy and face the task of finding people with whom they can be intimate. In middle adulthood, the stage of life that focuses on issues of generativity and creativity, folktales that include issues of justice and power may prove helpful. And older adults often find comfort in the

⁵⁷ Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 154.

stories of happy endings and justice prevailing as they develop a sense of ego integrity and wisdom, and struggle with issues of aging and death.

Story as a Pastoral Counseling Instrument: Narrative Therapy Theory

Shaw points out that narration is a universal human activity:

People think, dream, enact, and tell stories. In so doing, they engage in a process of self-reaction and meaning making that is an important condition of learning. Learners first engage a subject narratively, since experience is constructed through the narration that embeds it with meaning. In other words, narrative gives shape to experience and turns the raw data of experience into meaning. Therefore, narrative represents a primary or privileged form of discourse and a significant way of knowing. Narrative also offers possibilities of legitimate notions of reality or destabilizing them.⁵⁸

Understanding the meaning-making and reality-checking elements of narration helps us to comprehend certain human behaviors. Stories are therefore an effective tool for pastoral care and counseling.

In the early 1990s, Michael White and David Epston created a new form of counseling which came to be known as narrative therapy theory.⁵⁹ Since then, this practice has become influential in pastoral counseling. However, the underlying foundational assumptions of Narrative Therapy Theory come from Alfred Adler, a contemporary of Sigmund Freud.

Pastoral counselor Christie Neuger summarizes the primary assumptions of Adler in this way: “[Human] personality is a complex interweaving of biology, of meaning making, of striving for perfection, problem solving, and social interest,” and “the

⁵⁸ Shaw, 4 –5.

⁵⁹ The book, Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends by Michael White and David Epston (New York; Norton, 1990), describes the practice of Narrative Therapy.

personality must be seen in this fundamental wholeness and that elements of the personality arise from challenges to, and the maturing of, each of these aspects.”⁶⁰ From the earliest stages of life, people form within themselves their “life style,” which is defined as a set of beliefs, or “a self-narrative that begins simply and gathers data of our life experiences and cultural rules in order to become more complex and more fully explanatory.”⁶¹

As people experience life, the self-narrative or life-style becomes the criterion to choose information that fits the life-style and reject others. Neuger explains:

[People] live their lives in keeping with the story/narrative that they create early and then “thicken” throughout life. This narrative has many strands within it, even potentially contradictory strands that are held together by foundational interpretive assumptions. These assumptions, story lines, and plots are generated through personal experiences, familiar roles and stories, institutional influences, and larger cultural themes.

When we encounter an experience that contradicts the life-style we have chosen, we go through the selection process of either ignoring or rejecting the experience, or reshaping the chosen life-style to fit that experience. Often, in the process of reshaping the self-narrative, transformation takes place.

Narrative therapy theory, operating on the assumptions of Adler, acknowledges that the self-narrative is socially constructed and seeks to find a way to help people to identify the aspects of self-narrative that may cause them problems. In this process, the narrative therapist helps people deconstruct the harmful or problem narrative and reconstruct a

⁶⁰ Neuger, 41.

⁶¹ Ibid., 42.

more helpful preferred narrative, which “generate(s) new language and new interpretative lenses and thus create new realities.”⁶² Another important aspect of narrative therapy is the separation of the problem and the person. The problem does not identify the whole person, neither is the person the problem. Rather, the problem is only one aspect of the person’s life.

Narrative therapy is particularly helpful for those who have no voice culturally and traditionally-- those who are marginalized, oppressed, or forgotten, who are forced to live on the narratives created by the dominant group.⁶³ By being able to tell their own stories, the voiceless find power in self-authoring and create counter-stories against the traditionally held beliefs. In authoring counter-stories, two things can happen: reframing, and restorying. Neuger defines reframing as a shifting of the framework that causes problems so that “more authentic and life-giving truths emerge from story than they did through its original framework of meaning.”⁶⁴ Restorying, on the other hand, entails “remembering and giving credibility to stories that had no place in the problematic narrative.”⁶⁵ Through reframing and restorying, the counselee gains a healthier self-narrative, which moves the community to recreate healthier cultural stories that embrace

⁶² Ibid., 43.

⁶³ Generally women are the majority in the categories of voiceless, marginalized, oppressed, or forgotten. Centuries of patriarchal tradition created men as the dominant group who created dominant narratives. In this section, however, I did not specify gender in the category of those who are voiceless, as it is certain that there are some men who fit in this category, and I do not want to exclude them outright. There is no reason why narrative therapy cannot also be effective for males.

⁶⁴ Neuger, 137.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 141.

and empower all the members of the community. Narrative therapy helps the patient and the patient's community to deconstruct problem narratives and reconstruct preferred narratives.

Narrative Therapy Theory as a Practice of Pastoral Care

The use of narrative therapy theory is not limited to one-on-one pastoral counseling but can be used in pastoral care in general. In fact, Neuger suggests that we use the narrative process in and through everyday encounters that challenge core assumptions. She proposes five Rs; remembering, reframing, reversing, re-imagining, and restorying.⁶⁶ Those who have been living and adapting to the dominant problem narratives should seek others who might have seen things differently and remember the alternative truth. As the witnesses tell and retell the stories accurately and truthfully, new insights may be gained and new angles may be proposed. This gentle process of listening to the stories with the purpose of discovering new frameworks for interpretation is called reframing. Through reframing the dominant problem narrative is challenged, and new meaning making happens.

Reversing is the most difficult part of the process since it involves going against the deeply rooted value system that has been held as truths (for example, patriarchy). A group context maybe more effective for reversing as those who have experienced similar destructive settings can testify to the value of challenging the absolute claims of the deeply rooted dominant problem narrative. Reimagining, which will be elaborated in the paragraph below, gives new directions and choices, and restorying, as described above,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 141-47.

takes “those unstories that have existed in experience but that have not be able to be claimed, and [builds] them into the core narrative.”⁶⁷

Reimagining involves imagination, which Neuger claims to be “the most important and effective resources available for helping women gain clarity and imagine new directions and choices.”⁶⁸ She defines the image as “an experiential reality in and of itself – one that integrates thought, feeling, and meaning inside the self and the social context.”⁶⁹ The power of image is in its autonomous character. Neuger emphasizes that images have “a life of their own while still being under the control of the imager... tapping into the knowledge and perceptions through a nonlinear, nonintellectual route.”⁷⁰ Therefore “the use of imagination unleashes the creative, integrative power within each person to find out what symbols open her up to more meaningful connection with God, with self, and with creation.”⁷¹ With its power to reach the inner world, the process of imagination “allows new narrative possibilities to emerge that come out of authentic self-experience and yet takes the various contextual realities of the [person]’s life into consideration.”⁷² Especially in the process of an individual or group spiritual direction, either in the form of an active imagination or a guided imagery, I have practiced and led

⁶⁷ Ibid., 145-46.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 144.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 145.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

re-imagination with powerful results. In chapter 2, under the subtitle “Active Imagination,” I will further elaborate the power of imagination.

I often practice and highly recommend the use of Neuger’s five Rs. Whether weaving into a sermon, designing and applying within the education courses, for small group projects, or simply in formal and informal group conversations, if not the whole process, then a portion of the five Rs can be utilized into a practice of pastoral care. Especially for women and marginalized groups, it is absolutely necessary to remember, reframe, reverse, re-imagine, and retell stories, when faced with the challenging core values or re-evaluating events that confront core assumptions.

Jungian analyst James Hillman⁷³ uses the term “story-awareness” to describe the awareness in life about the existence of stories. Story-awareness comes from early childhood experiences of being introduced to stories. Hillman specifically points to stories in their oral and written form, not ones produced on a screen. He claims that stories are a means of finding oneself in events that might not otherwise make psychological sense at all. Hillman especially highlights the therapeutic value of story-awareness, and explains that the analyst and the patient together can re-write a case history into a new story, performing through this “fiction” the collaborative work of analysis. Therefore, rather than confining stories in the areas of education and literature, we should live in and live through stories, for story is a place where our soul can find

⁷³ This portion comes from the article “A Note on Story” by James Hillman published in *Parabola* 4 (Fall 1979): 43 – 45.

comfort and rest. He states: "To have 'story-awareness' is *per se* psychologically therapeutic. It is good for soul."⁷⁴

Story as an Instrument for Oppression

As we have already encountered in the section on narrative therapy theory above, there are stories that are problematic in validating the identity of certain groups. Drawing on Ann Pellowski, Shaw offers seven theories of the origins of story telling. One of the theories states that "[Storytelling] encoded and reserved the norms of social interaction that a given society lived by."⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the norms of social interaction are often set by a dominant group of leaders who establish the interaction in ways that maintain the stability of the society that they, with their leadership, have established often at great cost to others. Even the life-giving and life-affirming stories from the gospels can turn into a tool for dominant groups to oppress others in the name of stability as those with power to interpret, highlight, and affirm certain segments of the messages while ignoring others.

Shaw, drawing on the wisdom of Friedrich Froebel, the nineteenth century educator, specifies folktales as the proper means to develop the spiritual life of the child. She further conveys Froebel's belief that those folktales should not be made to become tools for moralistic and didactic teaching. She writes:

For Froebel, growth occurred naturally and incrementally as the life of the child was nurtured by the educational process, which included the hearing of folktales without any moralizing addendum. These stories, according to Froebel, had the

⁷⁴ Hillman, 43.

⁷⁵ Shaw, 37.

power to refresh the mind, exercise the intellect and test judgment and feeling without adult explanation or interpretation.⁷⁶

This basic assumption, which affirms that stories are an effective tool for education, has been misused by some adults who, in a misguided eagerness to protect children from the darker side of life, choose to remove some of the more frightening or gruesome elements from the traditional stories. Michael Benanav, in his article “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” fiercely criticizes Disney’s versions of traditional fairytales as inadequate reflections of life itself, thus distorting truth and implanting in the mind of a child a false expectation and outlook in life. Benanav claims that we recognize ourselves in fictional characters, whether human or animal, and easily transpose their experiences onto our selves. However, in most renditions of traditional folktales and fairytales produced by Disney, grisly images and tragic endings are erased and replaced by comic relief or twisted happy endings, and characters are often painted too ideally to be real. He explains:

The contemporary versions of these stories reflect the American fantasy that problems should be easy and relatively painless to solve and that, after a few struggles, everything will work out the way we want. What is hard has been contrived to be soft. In this way, they express a mentality that thrives on its own wistful insistence on passive-aggressive denial and a touch of magical thinking. If we say that this is how life is, we seem to believe, and repeat it enough times, then so it will be.⁷⁷

Grave mistakes are made, not only in the Disney versions on the silver screens, but also in written and oral transmission of the stories. Often in our attempt to utilize stories as tools for moral instruction, we minimize the story into one thematic statement in the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 118-19.

⁷⁷ Michael Benanav, “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” *Salt Journal* 3, no. 3 (summer 2001): 14.

form of its subtitle. The transmission of the story of Shim Cheong exemplifies this process. The old written formats of this story have the title “The Story of Shim Cheong.” As time went on, however, the story was not only reduced from a tale of beautiful and intricate human experiences and expressions of emotions into mere summaries of events, but also gained subtitles like, “Shim Cheong, the Dutiful Daughter” or “Shim Cheong: a Story of the Filial Daughter.” These subtitles highlight and present one element of the story, Shim Cheong’s filial piety, as the main theme of the story. Even before one reads the whole story through, the subtitle interferes with one’s focus and reduces the whole story into one moral lesson, an admonition to be dutiful sons and daughters. In its reduction, the story loses its layers and layers of meaning filled with the attractions and fascinations of life. As Stanley Hauerwas proclaims, “[S]tories are indispensable for those matters that deal with the irreducible particular – that which cannot be other than it is and thus cannot be accounted for by any other.... [S]tories are required by those matters that we can only describe analogically.”⁷⁸ Therefore we should be careful not to reduce the irreducible.

Sometimes we use only portions of stories in their summarized forms. The summarizing eliminates many of the rich original images and distorts the multi-layered messages into a simple moral lesson to be taught. Similarly, adults often interpret or explain these stories to convey the message they have in mind, instead of letting the stories address, in their most imaginative forms, the essential truths of human struggles in an indirect but creative way. Bettelheim explains:

⁷⁸ Hauerwas, 346.

Explaining to a child why a fairy tale is so captivating to him destroys, moreover, the story's enchantment, which depends to a considerable degree on the child's not quite knowing why he is delighted by it. And with the forfeiture of this power to enchant goes also a loss of the story's potential for helping the child struggle on his own, and master all by himself the problem which has made the story meaningful to him in the first place. Adult interpretations, as correct as they may be, rob the child of the opportunity to feel that he, on his own, through repeated hearing and ruminating about the story, has coped successfully with a difficult situation. We grow, we find meaning in life, and security in ourselves by having understood and solved personal problems on our own, not by having them explained to us by others.⁷⁹

Bettelheim is firm in his belief:

The true meaning and impact of a fairy tale [folk tale] can be appreciated, its enchantment can be experienced, only from the story in its original form. Describing the significant features of a fairy tale gives as little feeling for what it is all about as the listing of the events of a poem does for its appreciation.⁸⁰

Conclusion

Storytelling has a unique role in Christian and secular education and in pastoral care and counseling. As I have shown, no other teaching form can come close to sharing its power to convey fundamental truths, and no other teaching form has a greater potential to be abused to perpetuate oppression upon a marginalized group. Storytelling as a teaching form has a rich and powerful tradition ranging back long before the birth of Christ, and it has been used countless times since then in the shaping of young minds and mature hearts. Narrative theology is only one of the latest forms of teaching through storytelling, but it is one that addresses many key issues of theology and faith that are relevant in today's dynamic, multicultural world. Narrative therapy, with its power to deconstruct problem

⁷⁹ Bettelheim, 18-19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 19.

narratives and reconstruct preferred narratives, helps the marginalized and the voiceless generate new lenses to interpret harmful realities and create new realities that affirm life and empower victims of abuse and oppression. Stories are powerful tools in teaching, counseling, and caring of the soul beyond our intellectual levels of understanding and in healing the wounds that are embedded in the subconscious. Clarissa Pinkola Estés speaks clearly and loudly on this point. "Stories are embedded with instructions which guide us about the complexities of life. Stories enable us to understand the need for and the ways to raise a submerged archetype."⁸¹

As I approach this project, I am reminded of a story about Michaelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel. For many years, art textbooks and photographs pictured the ceiling frescoes in muted colors and soft tones, and many artists admired Michaelangelo's subtle use of shading. In the 1980s, a team of artists began a restoration project to clean away the layers of grime that had accumulated on the frescos over the years. To their surprise, these artists discovered that when the dirt was stripped away, the muted browns gave way to rich, vibrant reds and blues. Michaelangelo's true work had not been done in subtle shading, but in breathtaking colors stretching across the entire chapel ceiling. These colors had lain forgotten for many years under layers of dirt and grime, to the point that no one remembered what the artist's original intent had been.

It is my desire to retell a precious story of Shim Cheong, which is old and familiar for most Koreans and Korean-Americans, in a prayerful and balanced fashion, allowing the

⁸¹ Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 15.

pure, vibrant colors of this story to present themselves, stripped of the cultural and social grime it has acquired over the years. I would like to let the story, untainted by any personal biases and beliefs, speak to fundamental truths about life and about people, people who trust God and life itself. These words of Bettelheim resonate with my sentiment:

Each fairy tale is a magic mirror, which reflects some aspects of our inner world, and of the steps required by our evolution from immaturity to maturity. For those who immerse themselves in what the fairy tale has to communicate, it becomes a deep, quiet pool which at first seems to reflect only our own image; but behind it we soon discover the inner turmoils of our soul – its depth, and ways to gain peace within ourselves and with the world, which is the reward of our struggles.⁸²

⁸² Bettelheim, 309.

CHAPTER 2

Theories of Shadow and Individuation

Introduction

My argument is based on Carl G. Jung's theories of psychoanalysis, especially his theories of the shadow and individuation. It is important to note that Jung's theories present their own limitations when applied to interpret an Eastern folktale in feminist perspective. After all, Carl Jung was a man who lived from the latter part of 19th century to the mid 20th century, who thought and wrote as a man shaped by Western culture. However, Jung's theory offers many important insights and tools that can enable us to describe how the souls of Eastern people are manifested through folktales and equip us to understand how women can utilize the symbols richly inlaid in folktales to comprehend themselves and their relationship with the world and God.

This second chapter of the project will focus on the theories of the human psyche as described by Carl G. Jung, laying down the groundwork for my argument and analysis in the subsequent chapters. The first part introduces us to Carl Jung's basic theory of the psyche, as well as some basic vocabulary that must be understood to comprehend the theory. Key concepts that will be explored are the self, the unconscious and conscious, the shadow, the ego, and the anima and animus. The second part will focus on the process called individuation and the technique of active imagination. As this is the key concept we want to apply to study the story of Shim Cheong in chapter 5, an in-depth look at the process of individuation is necessary. Throughout the chapter, the work of

Demaris S. Wehr will evaluate the limitations and strengths of Jung's theory through a feminist perspective, a point of view essential for any application of Jung's theories for Korean women's transformation.

Basic Concepts of Human Psyche as Defined by Carl Jung

The Self

"Formation, Transformation, Eternal Mind's eternal recreation.' And that is the self, the wholeness of the personality, which if all goes well is harmonious, but which cannot tolerate self-deceptions."¹ With a quotation from Faust, Carl Jung summed up his definition of the self. In Jung's definition, the "self" encompasses everything about us: the entirety of the person and the totality of the personality. The self constantly evolves, changing its formation, eternally recreating its contents and redefining their relationships to one another. To a degree, we are aware of transformations happening in the self, but much of the self is not obvious for observation due to the unconscious dynamics that make up a large portion of the human mind.

Naturally, the complexity of the self is beyond our understanding, but we can describe certain common parts and relationships that seem to exist in all people. For the sake of simplification, and due to the lack of a better terminology, I will refer to these parts that make up the self as "elements." These elements are not neatly divided into portions that fit together to make up the self, like pieces in a puzzle. Instead, they are layered and multi-dimensional in their compositions, overlapping in some instances and intertwined

¹ Carl Gustav Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe' (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 196, citing Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, pt. 2, trans. by Philip Wayne (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1959), 79.

in others, much like a woven tapestry. Even this image is insufficient, as a tapestry is made up of distinct threads, while the elements of the psyche blend into each other without rigid borders, in an organic and fluid fashion. However, by studying each element (both individually and in terms of their relationships with other personality elements) we may be able to understand the overall structure of the personality as described by Carl Jung.

The Conscious and the Unconscious

The conscious and the unconscious form the major division in the elements of the self, also described as "personality." Jung states that what we normally know of ourselves is not all there is to know about ourselves. There is a part of our mind that we are not readily aware of, which, in fact, makes up the larger portion of our self. The image of an iceberg, where much of the total mass may be underwater (the visible portion above water representing only the smallest fraction of the overall whole) is often used to describe the relationship between the conscious and unconscious. The function of the unconscious, the unknown part, is much more complicated and more difficult to understand because we cannot readily give attention to its activities because of its hidden nature. Jung calls this "the hypothesis of unconscious psychic processes."² Jung further divides the unconscious into two categories, thus distinguishing three different levels in the structure of the psyche: consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious:

² Carl Gustav Jung, The Collected Works, ed. Sir Herbert Read, et al., trans. R. F. C. Hull, 2nd rev. ed., Bollingen Series 20; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 9: 275.

[The self] embraces not only the conscious but also the unconscious psyche, and is therefore, a personality which we also are.... There is little hope of our ever being able to reach even approximate consciousness of the self, since however much we may make conscious there will always exist an indeterminate and indeterminable amount of unconscious material which belongs to the totality of the self.³

Consciousness is the part of our psyche that is known to us, while the unconscious contains the parts of the personality that could just as well be conscious, but have been suppressed for various reasons. The unconscious is a mixture of the repressed contents of the consciousness, all the psychic components that lie below the threshold of consciousness, subliminal sense-perceptions, and all the material that has not yet reached the threshold of consciousness. Jung describes the unconscious as "a reality in potentia."⁴ Another expression Jung uses to describe the unconscious is "the mother of consciousness,"⁵ since all conscious thought derives from the unconscious in some way or another. He also stresses that "conscious and unconscious are not necessarily in opposition to one another, but complement one another to form a totality, which is the self."⁶

The conscious is further divided into seven categories: The most commonly recognized elements of consciousness consist of those elements that we receive through the senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, etc.), through our rational mind, and

³ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 398.

⁴ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 279.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 281.

⁶ C. G. Jung, "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," in The Portable Jung, ed. Joseph Campbell, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 126.

through our emotions. Intuition, volition, and instinct make up the other three elements, although they are often conflated with the first three elements (i.e. using the term “feeling” to refer to intuition). This is largely due to the lack of a proper vocabulary to describe the processes of the latter three elements.

Jung considers dreaming the seventh element of the conscious mind. Dreams are the results of “unconscious psychic processes obtruding themselves upon consciousness.”⁷ Dreams, therefore, can be described as windows through which we can peek into the unconscious. Other methods of accessing the unconscious mind include hypnotism, somnambulism, and divination. Jung also observes that people with limited vision or limited auditory sense do unconsciously the things that people with all the active senses do consciously.⁸ They must possess extra-sensory abilities that are not clearly explained in the conscious level. One channel whereby the individual can bring to the consciousness some of the contents of the unconscious is what Jung calls active imagination. In active imagination “a person encourages, or allows, the unconscious to produce its fantasy or to make its statement in some fashion (such as in drawing, sand play, or waking dreams).”⁹ I will discuss active imagination further in the second part of this chapter, when I describe individuation.

⁷ Jung, “The Structure of the Psyche,” in Portable Jung, 27.

⁸ Dreams are a very important channel of communication with the unconscious, and frequently used as the means of communication with the Divine. In “The Story of Shim Cheong,” Blind Shim also has significant dreams which he was able to visualize and describe clearly. I will further explore the dreams portrayed in “The Story of Shim Cheong” in Chapter 5.

⁹ Wehr, 37.

As described above, the contents of the unconscious can be merged into consciousness, changing the make-up of consciousness. Jung describes the process this way:

... [Our] consciousness does not create itself - it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from the unconscious condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious.¹⁰

Therefore it is safe to assume that the unconscious ceaselessly engages in grouping and regrouping its contents. Usually it is consciousness that grows out of the unconscious psyche, but on occasion the contents of consciousness become unconscious through repression.

The unconscious often manifests itself in subtle ways. Jung asserts that "[an] attentive observer can detect [the unconscious] without difficulty, while the observed person remains quite unaware of the fact that he is betraying his most secret thoughts or even things he has never thought consciously."¹¹ When we pay attention to the movement of the unconscious as it is manifested into our awareness, we begin to know more of our whole being. (I will elaborate on this process later, in the section titled "Individuation.")

The unconscious has two levels; the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is made up of the components that were either never intense enough to come to consciousness, or those components that, for various reasons, are repressed from conscious thought. Often, components that are too intense

¹⁰ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 394.

¹¹ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 276.

for consciousness are suppressed in the unconscious. Individual differences determine this portion of the unconscious. Jung calls it "the superficial layer of the unconscious,"¹² as it is only the uppermost layer of the depths that make up the unconscious mind.

The majority of the unconscious mind is made up of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, which he argues is a timeless and universal psyche shared by all of humanity. Unlike the personal unconscious (which is made up largely of personal experiences) the collective unconscious collects the archaic and mythological truths that make up the basics of human nature. Demaris Wehr, quoting Jung, defines the collective unconscious as follows:

It is the "sea" on which the individual unconscious and conscious rest. It contains "qualities that are not individually acquired but are inherited, e.g., instincts as impulses to carry out actions from necessity, without conscious motivation."¹³

Jung even goes so far as to describe the collective unconscious as containing "the whole spiritual heritage of [*hu*]mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual."¹⁴

In both the collective and personal unconscious, elements of the unconscious mind are constantly rising and falling from consciousness. However, when a portion of the unconscious rises to the conscious mind and is being perceived in the psyche, its form has to be altered to take a form that can be understood by the conscious mind. In this case, the portion that emerges into consciousness takes its color from the individual

¹² Ibid., 3.

¹³ Wehr, 7, quoting Jung, Collected Works, 8:133.

¹⁴ Jung, "The Structure of the Psyche," Portable Jung, 45. The italic is mine to add gender inclusiveness.

consciousness in which it happens to appear. When these "revealed contents" originate in the personal unconscious, they are called "the feeling-toned complexes." If they originate from the collective unconscious, they are known as "archetypes."

Wehr brings to our attention many feminists' concern about Jung's understanding of the source of symbols in the collective unconscious. Even though Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is very helpful for a feminist understanding of the power of symbols, we should be cautious about universalizing these symbols, as they have sprung out of a deeply entrenched, male-dominant tradition. It is crucial for women to make this unconscious androcentrism conscious. Wehr suggests two levels of caution as we explore Jung's symbol system: On one level, we need to engage it "as a device for unmasking the way symbols emerge from and operate in the psyche, and on a second, deeper level, as a symbol system itself, with all the dangers of legitimization of the social order such systems hold."¹⁵

The Ego

In the center of the fields of consciousness is the ego. Hopcke helps us to define the ego as "a complex, a feeling-toned group of representations of oneself that has both conscious and unconscious aspects and is at the same time personal and collective."¹⁶

Jung further elucidates:

Everything that is directly related to the ego is conscious. Consciousness can even be equated with the relation between the ego and the psychic contents. But

¹⁵ Wehr, 25.

¹⁶ Robert Hopcke, A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C. G. Jung (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), 79.

unconscious phenomena are *so little related to the ego* [emphasis mine] that most people do not hesitate to deny their existence outright.¹⁷

From this statement, we arrive at the conclusion that the ego is the channel through which the self is expressed. It is different from the "persona"¹⁸ which includes, to a large extent, external factors related to social expectations. Ego is one of many complexes within the psyche and, even in a shaky way, "represents the very hard-won self-awareness that makes us human."¹⁹ Even Jung himself referred to the ego by many other names, like ego complex, ego consciousness, or the self with a lowercase "s" as compared to the Self, which is defined as "the archetype of wholeness within the collective unconscious."²⁰ The following comparisons of the ego and its relation to the Self by Hopke help us to further clarify what the ego is:

If our ego has lost contact with the Self, unsettling feelings of alienation arise within – a meaninglessness, perhaps depression, the sense of being adrift, without direction or hope – feelings that seem so frequently to characterize contemporary lives. On the other hand, if our ego has become too closely connected to the Self, arrogating to ourselves the endless possibilities and dynamic power of this larger psychic Self, the result is what Jung termed inflation, a sense of exhibitionistic grandiosity, an unrealistic view of oneself as omnipotent, omniscient, unassailable.²¹

¹⁷ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 275-76.

¹⁸ The term "persona" is used to describe the part of the self that we display to the world. It is our perception of what the world expects of us, and how the self meets the world through various adaptations toward that expectation. The expectations may be influenced by the offices we hold, the titles we earn, or other functions we are expected to fulfill. It is not necessarily negative in nature, but can be deceptive and cover up the real self when given too much emphasis.

¹⁹ Hopcke, 79.

²⁰ Ibid., 80.

²¹ Ibid.

Archetypes

The archetypes are the forms, modes, or categories that regulate the instinctual forces of the psyche. They are like instincts in the physical body, except that they operate in the psyche. They are the outlines or motifs through which the collective phenomena are experienced in us. In other words, "It is not a question of inherited ideas, but of inherited thought-patterns."²² Jung further explains:

[Archetype] is an irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time. Because of its instinctual nature, the archetype underlies the feeling-toned complexes and shares their autonomy.²³

Jung uses terms like "the chaotic urge to life", "a secret knowledge" or "hidden wisdom" to further describe archetypes and elaborates that "[Archetypes] are complexes of experience that come upon us like fate, and their effects are felt in our most personal life."²⁴ Jung makes clear that, "The real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious, that it is transcendent."²⁵

Wehr differentiates between archetypes and archetypal images, though Jung's earlier writings did not distinguish between the two. She explains that Jung recognizes the archetype as a hypothesis. She writes:

It is the assumption of a patterning process in the human brain, instinctual and alike everywhere, expressing itself in universal human behavior patterns, motifs,

²² Jung, "Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," Portable Jung, 83.

²³ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 392.

²⁴ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 30.

²⁵ Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 393.

themes, images, and symbols. Jung sometimes likens the archetype itself to a vortex of energy, drawing to its certain themes and images.²⁶

Archetypal images, on the other hand, accompany much emotion. "They are those typically human experiences and accompanying images that touch us the most deeply."²⁷ Some of the archetypal images are shadow, anima and animus, which will be further discussed below.

It is interesting to read how Jung came to recognize common archetypes in several of his German patients as early as 1918. The patients he had observed shared peculiar disturbing traits, expressed in primitivity, violence, cruelty, depression, and a great restlessness. He argues that these collective unconscious phenomena in the individuals were the precursor for the massive destructive human slaughter throughout World War II, especially the mass murder of the Jews in the concentration camps. The archetypes of darkness, awakened during the aftermath of World War I, nurtured through a philosophy of hate, and supported by mass psychology, snowballed to create one of the most systematically destructive and cruel events in modern history.²⁸

Archetypes are not always destructive in nature. There are archetypes of order that can challenge confusion and disorder in the world. However, because of the possibilities that the forces of chaos will accumulate and bring negative results when the numbers are added in a mass movement, Jung emphasizes that it is important to recognize these

²⁶ Wehr, 52.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ For further detail read his article titled "The Fight with the Shadow" from Jung's Collected Works, 10: 218-43.

collective unconscious phenomena and gives tools to individuals to control them. He states:

[When] the individual [was] able to cling to a shred of reason, or to preserve the bonds of a human relationship, a new compensation was brought about in the unconscious by the very chaos of the conscious mind, and this compensation could be integrated into consciousness. New symbols then appeared, of a collective nature, but this time reflecting the forces of order.²⁹

I will further elaborate on this process of the integration of the unconscious into consciousness under the heading of "Individuation."

The Shadow³⁰

Each of us as a human being has disturbing impulses in our psyche that cause tension in the ego because of their characteristics. The impulses may be completely opposite to the way we normally perceive ourselves. Jung names these impulses the shadow, and describes them as "everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself [*or herself*] and yet is always thrusting itself upon him [*or her*] directly or indirectly."³¹ Because of its disturbing nature, human beings have a tendency to repress the shadow side of the unconscious, choosing not to acknowledge that more troubling portion of the psyche. Repressing the shadow, however, does not diminish its impact on our actions: instead, the shadow takes its course and expresses itself in destructive manners. One of the ways the shadow expresses itself inappropriately is through projection, attributing to

²⁹ Jung, Collected Works, 10: 220.

³⁰ It should be noted that there are racist overtones in using the term "shadow" and calling this element the "dark side" or arguing that it appears as a person with dark skin. Wehr alerts us that Jung's theory is "white-centric" as well as androcentric, Wehr, 63.

³¹ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 284. The italic is mine to add gender inclusiveness.

others the very things we find repulsive about ourselves. When one's shadow is projected onto others, this can result in paranoia, suspicion, or other destructive behaviors.

Jung emphasizes that "the shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort."³² Jung goes on to state that the shadow has an emotional nature. An emotion, according to Jung, "is not an activity of the individual but something that happens to [one],"³³ and "a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive, or possessive quality."³⁴ Jung further elaborates:

Affects occur usually where adaptation is weakest, and at the same time they reveal the reason for its weakness, namely a certain degree of inferiority and the existence of a lower level of personality. On this lower level with its uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions one behaves more or less like a primitive, who is not only passive victim of his [*or her*] affects but also singularly incapable of moral judgment.³⁵

Even though the shadow is characterized as the negative or inferior side of the personality, it is not to be considered the source of all evil. Jung asserts, "[The shadow] does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc."³⁶ The shadow deserves attention. One needs to become conscious of its

³² Jung, "Phenomenology of the Self," Portable Jung, 145.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 145-46. The italic is mine to add gender inclusiveness.

³⁶ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 266.

existence, recognize its shape and nature, and learn from it. Jung further expresses that "the shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. But one must learn to know oneself in order to know who one is."³⁷

The shadow is a real and living part of the personality, and it will continue its existence in whatever forms we want to give. Ignoring its existence or giving it a beautiful façade will not make it go away or change its nature. Therefore, we are strongly encouraged to find ways and means to give attention to the shadow and work it to the benefit of the whole personality, rather than suppressing it to the point of destruction. When the shadow side of the personality is not integrated into the consciousness, one can become neurotic or psychotic. Not integrating shadow also becomes a moral problem because the shadow is related to the problem of evil. Wehr explains the value of attending to the shadow: "because by acknowledging and integrating what the ego conceives of as 'evil' – most often found in the shadow – one prevents the shadow, as an autonomous subpersonality, from continuing to act out blindly. Personal 'evil' can be transformed."³⁸

The individual's unattended shadows can interact with each other and mount up in a bigger scale on the social level creating very destructive events. The Holocaust is a

³⁷ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 21.

³⁸ Wehr, 61.

perfect example of the destruction that resulted when a society failed to deal with their collective shadow. Wehr explains:

Hitler spoke with the power of the unintegrated shadow, touching deeply upon other people's unconscious hatred and fear, causing them to accept the rationalization for the shadow's behavior. The shadow, like all archetypal images that are unintegrated, is hypnotic, compelling, spellbinding.³⁹

Also, a nation can project a collective shadow onto another nation perceiving itself as morally pure while projecting unto the other nation as evil and imperialistic. For an example of this phenomenon, one need only look at the relationship between Russia and the United States during the Cold War.

Anima and Animus

When elements of the shadow are further suppressed and become more difficult to be recognized by the consciousness, we name these elements the animus (in a woman) or the anima (in a man). (Jung used the gender-neutral term "syzygy" when speaking of the animus and anima: for the sake of convenience, that term will be used in all further discussion.)

It is important to note that when manifested in dream imagery, the syzygy is represented by the opposite sex from the individual, while the shadow has the same sex characteristics as the subjects. A person's syzygy and shadow are both parts of the collective unconscious, thus these two elements are referred to as archetypes. The contents of the shadow, however, can be recognized fairly easily. The shadow can be inferred from the contents of the personal unconscious because the individual's ego casts a corresponding shadow within the psyche. The anima and animus, however, are further

³⁹ Ibid., 62.

hidden and seldom realized because they are ill developed. In fact, Jung used the term “inferior” when describing anima and animus. Hopke clarifies that Jung applied the term inferior “in the double sense of lying beneath one’s conscious personality and functioning imperfectly.”⁴⁰

Campbell footnotes that the syzygy consists of three elements; “the femininity pertaining to the man and the masculinity pertaining to the woman; the experience which man has of woman and vice versa; and, finally, the masculine and feminine archetypal image.”⁴¹ Jung describes anima and animus as “projection-making factors.”⁴² They are archetypes of a soulful nature that are expressed in the image of the parent of the opposite gender. For example: “The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros.”⁴³ Jung emphasizes that anima and animus are not inherently negative forces, but always serve a compensatory function. He explains:

Just as the anima becomes, through integration, the Eros of consciousness, so the animus becomes a Logos; and in the same way that the anima gives relationship and relatedness to a man’s consciousness, the animus gives to woman’s consciousness a capacity for reflection, deliberation, and self-knowledge.⁴⁴

Thus, the anima gives creative force to a man, while the animus opens a woman to becoming more analytical. The anima produces mood, while the animus produces

⁴⁰ Hopke, 92.

⁴¹ Campbell, n. 9 in “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *Portable Jung*, 160.

⁴² Jung, “Aion: Phenomenology of the Self,” *Portable Jung*, 148-62.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 154. A caution should be raised here that by associating anima as Eros and animus as Logos, there is a danger that women in general can be perceived as all emotions without logical ability and men as strong in logic with no emotions.

opinion.⁴⁵ It is important for us to reach deep into our unconscious for the positive resources hidden in anima and animus to compensate our weaker sides and lead a balanced life. However, Jung cautions:

Though the contents of anima and animus can be integrated, they themselves cannot since they are archetypes. Though the effects of anima and animus can be made conscious, they themselves are factors transcending consciousness and beyond the reach of perception and volition.⁴⁶

Therefore, Jung stresses the need to pay constant attention to the unpredicted expressions of unconscious contents and their process, for the power of anima and animus grows in proportion to the degree that they remain unconscious. Jung also argues that a person's anima and animus can be realized "only through a relation to a partner of the opposite sex, because only in such a relation do their projections become operative."⁴⁷ Jung also points out the fact that in Christianity, the divine syzygy can be recognized and developed. In the book of Genesis, we read about God creating humanity both male and female, while in the New Testament, Christ (the male embodiment of God) is balanced with the Church, which is often referred to as the bride of Christ, thus emphasizing the feminine side.⁴⁸

Wehr cautions us about male feminists, those men who became aware of their need to recover the feminine side of themselves. They may believe they have a handle on

⁴⁵ For further explanation on this, read C. G. Jung, "Anima and Animus," in The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung, ed. Violet S. de Laszlo, trans. by R. F. C. Hull. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 180-81.

⁴⁶ Jung, "Phenomenology of the Self," Portable Jung, 159.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 161.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 160-61.

women's true nature and want women to cultivate the male definition of the feminine.

Quoting Rosemary Ruether, Wehr elaborates:

[Male feminists] purport to understand and sympathize with women, and, no doubt, sincerely think they do. But they tend to become very hostile when women suggest that this definition of the "feminine" is really a male projection and not female humanity. The male ego is still the center of the universe, which "feminism" is now seduced into enhancing in a new way.⁴⁹

Individuation

Wehr calls individuation "the core process in analytical psychology."⁵⁰ It is a process of creating a complete individual. According to Hopke, Jung's "accounts of psychotherapy demonstrate how the individuation process almost always begins with [the] humbling integration of the shadow into one's conscious sense of self, the first and most important task on the road to psychic health."⁵¹ Without individuation, the shadow continues to become repressed, often with destructive results. As indicated in the name, there is the element of separateness and individuality. Wehr writes:

[The] separateness means especially becoming distinct from [attaining a separateness from] inner compulsions and voices that operate on one unconsciously..... and remain separate from the psychology of the mob..... well enough to avoid identification with them and the ensuing enactment ["acting out"] of their voices in a destructive mode.⁵²

This process of individuation is the focus of this chapter's second section. First, however, it is necessary to discuss what Jung called the Transcendent Function.

⁴⁹ Wehr, 3, quoting Rosemary Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 190.

⁵⁰ Wehr, 49.

⁵¹ Hopke, 84.

⁵² Wehr, 49-50.

The Transcendent Function

Because of the compensatory nature of the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious, which has been elaborated in the definition of the unconscious earlier, "the conscious behaves in a complementary manner towards the unconscious."⁵³ Jung names this union of conscious and unconscious contents the transcendent function. It is transcendent because the transition between the two elements is done without losing the content of the unconscious.

Jung describes this process of coming to terms with the unconscious in three steps: Consciousness puts its content on expression at the disposal of the unconscious contents. The unconscious takes the lead, the unconscious content is given form, and the meaning of the formulation is understood. Next the ego takes the lead and brings together the two to produce the transcendent function. At this point a warning is due, for the rediscovered unconscious often has a dangerous effect on the ego. Jung explains that "in the same way that the ego suppressed the unconscious before, a liberated unconscious can thrust the ego aside and overwhelm it."⁵⁴ Even though there is a risk of danger and some other unpleasant effects, it is an important process of widening the contents of consciousness through the confrontation with the unconscious.

This last step happens only if and when the integration happens. Avoidance is a natural resistance, but the process is encouraged because it gives meaning to the previously unknown unconscious product and gives it a visible shape. In case of vital

⁵³ Jung, "The Transcendent Function," Portable Jung, 273-74.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

threat, Jung suggests aestheticization (making it beautiful by putting artistic spin on it) and intellectualization as safe ways of dealing with the confrontation of the two opposites. There is always the danger of not giving the process its full attention when we aestheticize or intellectualize them, but they can be the intermediary steps to prepare us. And then we can be encouraged to further the journey of individuation, for this is the road to bring to awareness what truly is the self.

Active Imagination

Carl G. Jung used three methods to investigate unconscious mental activity that gives rise to the transcendent function, the word-association method, the method of dream-analysis, and the method of active imagination. I have chosen the method of active imagination as a major technique of transcendent function to begin the process of individuation for this project. In chapter 1, I used Neuger's words to illustrate the power of image and imagination under the subtitle of Narrative Therapy Theory as a Practice of Pastoral Care. In this section, I'll focus on Jung's definitions and further explain the technique he developed.

Jung differentiates imagination from fantasy. "[Fantasy] is mere nonsense, a phantasm, a fleeting impression; but imagination is active, purposeful creation."⁵⁵ Jung further distinguishes them apart:

A fantasy is more or less your own invention, and remains on the surface of personal things and conscious expectations. But active imagination, as the term denotes, means that the images have a life of their own and that the symbolic

⁵⁵ Jung, Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice (The Tavistock Lectures) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 192.

events develop according to their own logic, - that is, of course if your conscious reason does not interfere.⁵⁶

In active imagination, “the individual takes a receptive but active role in encountering and confronting various unconscious archetypal elements within his or her psyche.”⁵⁷

One begins the activity of active imagination by concentrating upon a starting point, which can be as imaginative as a scene in a story from the Bible, or as concrete as place in a picture book or a poster, or even a moment from a dream. If we simply let the unconscious lead us through imagination “[concentrating] on an inner picture and [being] careful not to interrupt the natural flow of events, [then] our unconscious will produce a series of images which make a complete story.”⁵⁸ While tapping into unconscious through active imagination, we can still remain safe and respond in ways the informed consciousness allows.

The Process of Individuation

Because our psyche has two distinct components (conscious and unconscious) that often exist in tension and conflict with one another, the harmonization of the two is the goal of healthy, wholesome life. This is where the transcendent function takes its role and leads us toward becoming a wholesome individual. This process of development arising out of the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious is called individuation. Robert Hopcke spells out Jung’s theory:

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Hopke, 34.

⁵⁸ Jung, Analytical Psychology, 193.

When the conscious and unconscious, ego and Self, have an ongoing relationship, Jung saw that one could then hold together a sense of one's unique individuality as well as one's connection to the larger experience of human existence, enabling one to live in a truly creative, symbolic, and individual way.⁵⁹

In Jung's own words individuation means "becoming an 'in-dividual', and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self."⁶⁰ He further explains:

Individuation... means a process of psychological development that fulfills the individual qualities given; in other words, it is a process by which a man [*or a woman*] becomes the definite, unique being he [*or she*] in fact is. In so doing he [*or she*] does not become 'selfish' in the ordinary sense of the word, but is merely fulfilling the peculiarity of his [*or her*] nature, and this, as we have said, is vastly different from egotism or individualism.⁶¹

Individuation, therefore, is the term used "to denote *the process* [emphasis mine] by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or 'whole.'"⁶² Jung was careful to describe individuation as a process, not a condition or an end goal. This process, therefore, should not be confused with egotism, individualism, and/ or self-alienation. Instead, it is a freeing of oneself from the collective psyche that drives people toward mass psychology and mob mentality. It is moving away from the influence of the negative forces of the collective unconscious in the form of darker archetypes. It is finding the individual traits that are overshadowed by uniform universality. It is, in Christian terms, finding the original self that was created in the

⁵⁹ Hopke, 62.

⁶⁰ Jung, "Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious," Portable Jung, 121.

⁶¹ Ibid., 122-23. The italic is mine to add gender inclusiveness.

⁶² Jung, Collected Work, 9: 275.

image of God. Sean Kelly recognizes Jung's overarching concern for wholeness as a religious venture, as Jung defines the wholeness as "to make holy or to heal."⁶³ Kelly further explains:

Because the goal of the individuation process is what wholeness, or holiness, of the Self which the total individual potentially is, the deep structures of the symbols which most typically guide the process and express its goal tend to coincide with the deep structures of the world's central religious symbols.⁶⁴

In my understanding of individuation, I see that it parallels what John Wesley calls "sanctification." They both describe the journey into "perfection," the maturation process that leads an individual to become the whole being that was created in God's image in the beginning. This process also embraces harmony and balance; recognizing the shadow side, but becoming neither consumed by it nor controlled by it. Wallace Clift describes it clearly:

The goal of the individuation process is to achieve a kind of 'mid-point' of the personality, where as Jung said, 'the center of the total personality no longer coincides with the ego, but with a point midway between the conscious and the unconscious.' Jung called this center the self. For him, the self was a psychological construct that served to express an unknowable essence that could not be grasped as such or defined, since it transcended human powers of comprehension. It could just as well be called the 'God within us,' Jung said.⁶⁵

Biblical Illustrations of Individuation

John A. Sanford defines individuation as "the transformation of human beings from egocentric, unconscious persons, to persons of wholeness, breadth of vision and spiritual

⁶³ Sean Kelly, Individuation and the Absolute: Hegel, Jung and the Path Toward Wholeness (New York: Paulist, 1993), 2, citing Carl Jung, Collected Works, 18: 18.

⁶⁴ Kelly, 3.

⁶⁵ Wallace B. Clift, Jung and Christianity: The Challenge of Reconciliation (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 22.

awareness.”⁶⁶ In his book, The Man Who Wrestled with God, he studied three characters from the Bible and described the process of individuation for each character. All three characters (Jacob, Joseph, and Moses) he introduces are male; I tried to pick out a female character to do a parallel study using Sanford’s formula, but there is not enough information or story associated with a female character in the Bible to make a thorough evaluation of the process of individuation.⁶⁷ This is another indication that the Bible is written from a very androcentric point of view.

Sanford spells out three basic experiences one goes through in the process of individuation. He writes:

There are three basic experiences in which our egocentricity can be changed: through suffering, through the recognition of a power greater than our own will at work in our lives, and by coming to care for someone other than ourselves.⁶⁸

Suffering is illustrated as an archetypal experience where we plunge deeply into the psychological wilderness. Again it should be noted that to fit this model to a female character we need to approach the process from an opposite angle: The opposite of egocentricity may be annihilation of self, and the opposite of suffering may be described as rejoicing in selfhood. The encounter of divine for female may happen when they reach deeply into themselves rather than seeking it from outside. Caring for someone is a second nature for most women. For a female character, caring for oneself and figuring

⁶⁶ John A. Sanford. The Man Who Wrestled with God: A Study of Individuation (Personal Growth toward Wholeness) based on Four Bible Stories (King of Prussia, Pa.: Religious Publishing, 1974), 10.

⁶⁷ Ruth and Naomi are two female characters that have extensive information about their life journey in the Biblical text, but what we have is still not sufficient to properly illustrate individuation.

⁶⁸ Sanford, 26.

out one's own emotional and spiritual needs may be the most important step that should be remembered and practiced.

Sanford identifies the second of the life-changing experiences as: "a numinous experience,"⁶⁹ using the Latin word, "numen", referring to "a presiding spirit or divine being," the power beyond human beings. He explains that the numinous experience is a confrontation with an autonomous spiritual power. For Jung, many experiences with the unconscious have the quality of numinous experiences, for "the center of the unconscious (is) a powerful numinosum."⁷⁰ Sanford elaborates:

[There] is a psychological Center within us, a point where our personalities become connected to God. If we can relate to this inner Center, we find ourselves enclosed in a psychologically and spiritually protective and strengthening circle, and our inner integrity is preserved even in the midst of extreme adversity.⁷¹

The third experience Sanford lists as part of the process of individuation is coming to care for someone other than us, as described above. This experience can also be explained in Jung's concept of anima and animus. For a man to develop into a whole person, he has to be in contact with the feminine side. Sanford explains, "A man develops the hero within himself not only by performing feats of masculinity, but also by his creative relatedness to the feminine, for without this his masculinity becomes boorish or brutal."⁷² Since masculinity and femininity are two opposing traits, often they fight with each other, or one dominates the other. However, for true individuation to take

⁶⁹ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 70.

⁷² Ibid., 98.

place, the balance between masculine and feminine is critical, where “the masculine and feminine within us work creatively and in harmony.”⁷³

Finally, Sanford argues that individuation is not only a process that brings us to wholeness, but has been destined for us from the Fall, commonly known as the source of the original sin. He clarifies, “It was necessary for (Adam and Eve) to commit this ‘sin’ in order that they might begin their painful process of psychological development, and live in a world which was morally meaningful.”⁷⁴ Traditional Christian theologies emphasize obedience to God as a way of restoration from our fallen state, which was caused by Adam and Eve’s original sin of eating the forbidden fruit. Sanford, however, emphasizes the needs of the Fall not only merely to restore us in our relationship to God but also to elevate us to a higher ground. He writes, “For the kingdom is not obedience, but creativity; it is not restoration to a former primitive state from which we fell, but is reunification on a much higher level.”⁷⁵

Up until the moment when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, they have been “contained in the unconscious wholeness of nature.”⁷⁶ Their decision to eat the forbidden fruit is not an act of disobedience, according to Sanford, but “curiosity and a desire for power.” He elaborates:

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁷⁵ John A. Sanford, The Kingdom Within: The Inner Meaning of Jesus’ Sayings, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 1987), 66.

⁷⁶ Sanford, Man Who Wrestled with God, 124.

Curiosity, the desire to know, can be a mischievous motive, but surely it is also the nature of the Divine. Adam and Eve also wanted power, to become themselves like gods, because of the power their knowledge would give them. Power, too, can be a destructive emotion, but it is also the impetus within us, which drives us to the expansion of our lives and personalities. A person with no longing for power at all is a jellyfish and a nobody.⁷⁷

Curiosity and a desire to know brought us out of the paradise of Eden (the unconscious wholeness of nature) but it also transported us into the awareness of the consciousness with its powers of self-reflection. Before the Fall, we merely belonged to God. After the Fall, we are to actively and diligently seek our relationship with God through self-reflection and constant struggle of choices between good and evil. But through these struggles we can meet God on a higher level. Sanford affirms:

There can be no moral growth except in the world of opposites where conflict and moral choice are possible. This is apparently why Jesus never questions the necessity for evil. Though he confronted it all the time and fought to keep [*people*] from falling under its power, he never questioned the necessity for its existence. For without evil, without choice, without the opposites in life, no moral or spiritual growth is possible and evidently the development of [*a person's*] soul and spirit is of more value to God than his [*or her*] mere happiness.⁷⁸

It is refreshing to be able to interpret the Fall not as an act of disobedience to God who has the ultimate power over our lives, but as a natural impulse to gain creativity and curiosity to explore the unknown. For many centuries, traditional Christian theologies pounded on us the message of obedience to God, submission to religious authority, and deference to those in power. Sanford's interpretation gives us permission to question this image of God who imposes its power on us and demands obedience. For a feminist, it is

⁷⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 124. The italics are mine to add gender inclusiveness.

comforting to know that Eve (and all the women who come after her) is not to blame for tempting Adam to take a bite of the forbidden fruit. Instead, the Fall gave us an opportunity to be in touch with the shadow side of us and begin the process of individuation, which will lead us to a higher level and a more intimate and complete relationship with God.

Conclusion

Sanford's studies of prominent bible figures using Carl Jung's theories of the shadow and individuation offer a fresh perspective on humanity's role in God's overall plan. Instead of viewing humanity's relationship to God as a choice between blind obedience or eternal damnation, Sanford offers an alternate theology of spiritual wholeness, which views the Fall not as the first evil act, but as a necessary (if painful) step towards a higher destiny of oneness with God. This simple paradigm shift can alter the meaning of numerous major events in Christian history, including Jesus' death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection. Examining the theological implications of such a point of view will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

From a Korean-American, feminist point of view, however, Sanford's studies fall short of a perfect exploration of the process of individuation that can be utilized by all persons. As I have pointed out earlier, all of his examples are Hebrew males from the Old Testament period, and there is not one female character whose stories are introduced to us in detail. For this reason, chapter 5 will explore the process of individuation through a character who, in many ways, serves as an iconic representation of the experience of Asian women. This is the tale of Shim-Cheong, a story of a woman who

endured great hardship and persevered through it all, and (like the tale of Jesus' own death and resurrection) a story that has often been misused by those in power to promote a false doctrine of obedience, subservience, and sacrifice to the marginalized.

CHAPTER 3

Theologies of the Cross

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed a need to look at Christian theologies with fresh eyes, as I discussed a different interpretation of the Fall, as claimed by John Sanford. The question now becomes, “Why is it necessary to re-examine the Fall in a different manner than the doctrine of the loss of a perfect, sinless relationship with God?” The drive behind this reexamination can be seen in the abuse of this doctrine by authority figures to condone the exploitation of those on the margins of society. When a doctrine is so used, it becomes necessary to re-examine its interpretations, perhaps seeking an alternate interpretation that will rule out the possibilities for such abuse.

It has been argued that certain theologies of the cross that emphasize Jesus’ willing self-giving and redeeming power of his death have been used to perpetuate a mindset that can serve to condone violence against the innocent by encouraging the innocent to see their own suffering as the will of God. The harmful effects of such theologies can be further exacerbated when used in the context of a patriarchal society that emphasizes obedience to authority. As Korean culture is an example of such a patriarchal society, it is dangerous to use certain Western theories of atonement when discussing the meaning of the cross to Korean women. As stated before, when a doctrine runs such a dangerous risk of condoning abusive behavior, one must carefully re-examine that doctrine and determine whether it is still appropriate for the situation at hand.

The Concepts of Sin

In the beginning, God created a world of beauty and plenty (The Garden of Eden) and all the living things that called it home, including human beings (Adam and Eve). God told Adam and Eve that they might eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, on one condition: "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die" (Gen. 3: 3). But the serpent (whom we assume was also created, or at least placed in the Garden by God) said, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3: 4 – 5). Adam and Eve disobeyed God's order and ate the forbidden fruit. Theologians throughout Christian history have called this event the Fall from the original state, and interpreted this act of Adam and Eve as the origin of sin in humanity.

Augustine, in the late 4th century and early 5th century, worked extensively on the notion of sin. "To Augustine the nature of sin is a dual one – pride, on the one hand, and concupiscence, on the other."¹ In the original state, humanity was equipped with all the qualities to avoid sin: a constant virtuous will and the aid of divine grace, which was promised to humanity. But Adam, through his act of disobedience, lost both his virtuous will and the assistance of the divine will. Lohse explains the basic outline of Augustine's doctrine of sin:

Because of his pride Adam.... not only wanted to cling to God, he also wanted to follow the desires of his own heart. The result was the fall, through which Adam

¹ Bernhard Lohse, A Short History of Christian Doctrine, trans. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 112.

forfeited the aid of divine grace. That which led him to the fall, however, was not a casual act of disobedience, which... could be nullified by a new act of obedience. Through his pride, man destroyed the natural and proper constitution of his will. It was a sin, which... carried with it its own punishment.²

Through the Fall, Adam not only disobeyed God, but also lost the channel to receive the aid of divine grace. Traditionally, Christian doctrine calls this original sin and claims that from that moment forth, generation after generation, humanity is born with sin in their hearts and the inability to receive grace. Lohse observes that Augustine imparted profundity to the already existing traditional doctrines of sin. He writes:

For [Augustine] sin is not merely this or that wrongful deed. Hence sin is not something which can be removed by a mere appeal to the good in [*humanity*], or through instruction. Sin is, rather, the wrong orientation of all human existence since Adam's fall, an orientation from which no one can free himself [*or herself*].³

Sin didn't just result in kicking Adam and Eve out of the Garden. Their descendants carried the seed of sin as the result of the fall. According to Tertullian, a third century North African theologian, "evil finds its seat in the soul and becomes almost a constituent of [*human*] nature. For that reason he felt that even little children must be regarded as unclean."⁴

Through the period of Christian reformation, Luther further developed the Augustinian doctrine of sin. Luther affirmed that sin perpetuates itself as a result of the act of generation. For Luther, concupiscence was a reference to the self-will of humanity. Humanity asserts itself against God and thus keeps God from being God. Sin

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 114. The italics are mine for gender inclusiveness.

⁴ Ibid., 104. The italics is mine for gender inclusiveness.

is personal and includes physical and spiritual dimensions and is expressed in lack of faith and trust in God. Lohse quotes The Augsburg Confession:

[Since] the fall of Adam all men [*and women*] who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men [*and women*] are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.⁵

It takes something bigger than humanity to save us from sin. It takes God, and God alone can save humanity from sin. But how is God going to correct the mistake made by humanity? Christian thinkers and philosophers have addressed this question from many different angles and perspectives. In the next few sections of this chapter, I will address the major theories, weighing their pros and cons in regards to a feminist theology.

Theologies of Redemption and Their Criticism

Theory of Recapitulation

The theory of recapitulation claims that Christ, as the second Adam, by living a human life of humility and obedience, (even to death,) undid what Adam had done.⁶ There are two views in the theory of recapitulation. One view holds that Christ freed humanity by defeating Satan. Placher summarizes it this way:

Since Adam had voluntarily submitted to Satan, ... Satan had legitimate rights over all Adam's descendants. Since God is completely just, he could not simply ignore those rights. But God had never submitted to Satan, so Satan had no rights over God. Now Christ looked like a mere human being, and therefore Satan,

⁵ Ibid, 130-31, citing The Augsburg Confession, II. 1 – 2, The Book of Concord, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 29. The italics are mine for gender inclusiveness.

⁶ William C. Placher, A History of Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 70.

deceived, tried to seize him. Since Christ was also divine, Satan thereby overreached his rights. Now all deals were off, and God could legitimately punish Satan by freeing humanity from his power.⁷

The second view of the theory of recapitulation uses the language of the law courts:

Adam had disobeyed God and thereby damaged humanity's relationship with God. When one betrays a friend, something must be done to mend that friendship. Similarly, in the Old Testament, people who had sinned offered a sacrifice to signify their repentance and restore their fellowship with God. In law, one might have to pay a penalty to an injured party to redress the injury done – and one did people an injury if one failed to give them their due honor or respect. Our disobedience has distorted our relationship with God and left us owing God a penalty for the injury we have done his honor. Christ's suffering and death represent a sacrifice on our behalf, a payment for our sin.⁸

Whether it was by tricking Satan or by paying for the legal penalty, Jesus showed how much he honored God's wishes and submitted to the divine plan. By dying, Christ paid for the penalty and dishonor done to God, and restored our relationship with God.

Substitutionary Atonement Theology

In the twelfth century, Anselm of Canterbury formulated the first statement of substitutionary atonement theology, in which he dropped Satan completely and focused on the relationship between humanity and God, thus further developing the second view of the theory of recapitulation. Placher explains, quoting Anselm:

In sinning, we have broken our obligation to God and dishonored him. We owe God a debt, and, though God in his mercy would like to forgive us, as the foundation of perfect justice he cannot simply overlook sin. "Without satisfaction (i.e., without voluntary payment of the debt) God cannot forgive unpunished sin and the sinner cannot arrive at happiness."⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 71.

⁹ Ibid., 143-44, partially citing Anselm, "Why God Became Man" 1.19, Anselm of Canterbury, ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), 3: 85.

Since everything we have comes from God, and we owe everything to God, what we can do for God is not enough to pay for the price of sin to God.

Only God could do something above and beyond what God requires. Only God's voluntary submission to suffering could pay our debts, yet human beings have run up this debt, so justice would be satisfied only if a human being paid it. Therefore, if both justice and mercy are to be served, God must become a human being, so that "one and the same [individual] ... would pay through his human nature what this nature ought to pay and would be able through his divine nature to do what was required." Only Christ, both human and divine, can save us.¹⁰

Rebecca Ann Parker's study revealed that John Calvin further developed the Substitutionary Atonement Theology in the sixteenth century. She states:

In his Institutes John Calvin said, 'Not only was Christ's body given as the price of our redemption, but he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in spirit the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man.... *He bore the weight of divine severity*, since he was 'stricken and afflicted' by God's hand and experienced all the signs of *a wrathful and avenging God*.'¹¹

Parker goes on to caution us about the danger of this theology by pointing out the fact that God is portrayed as a wrathful and avenging God whose honor was shamed by the disobedience from his creatures. Even though God loves us, God cannot allow his creatures to shame him by disobeying him. So as a solution, God sends his own son Jesus to earth and demands that he dies to pay for the sin. Thus Jesus, unlike Adam and Eve who have disobeyed God, obeys God's wishes, dies on the cross, and brings redemption for all of us. Jesus becomes the substitute offering to make up for our sinful nature and restores God's honor. Now we regain worthiness in spite of our original

¹⁰ Placher, 144, citing Anselm, "Why God Became Man" 2.17, Anselm of Canterbury, ed. and trans. Hopkins and Richardson, 3: 127.

¹¹ Brock and Parker, 29. Emphasis mine.

unworthiness. Jesus makes it all right again by sacrificing himself and dying on the cross.

This theology, Parker is adamant, assumes the original worthlessness of human beings, and urges us to obey God and give our lives like Jesus did. The danger of this theological interpretation, especially for the victims of domestic or intimate violence, is in the possibility that the demands of God could be extended to the demands made by the father or father figures in the victims' lives (or other perpetrators), making them not only vulnerable to, but also more accepting of the abuses from authority figures. Rebellion, even an escape from the abuse, becomes a sin they do not want to commit. Instead, as good Christians, the victims believe they need to endure the pain in silence. Parker asserts that this theology sanctions human cruelty and demands unthinking obedience to God's will. The challenge for us, as fallen creatures, is to figure out what God's will is. In practice, it is often the physically stronger, or authority figure with worldly aims, who represents and speaks for God.

Peter Abelard, in 12th century, rejected Anselm's theory of Substitutionary Atonement on account of cruelty and insisted that we focus on the love of God that inspires a love in return from us, rather than focusing on the cruelty of a God that encourages expressions of brutality from us. He writes:

Through this unique act of grace manifested to us – in that his Son has taken upon himself our nature and persevered therein, in teaching us by word and example even unto death- he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace, and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him.¹²

¹² Peter Abelard, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (Excerpt)*, in *A Scholastic Miscellany*, ed. and trans. Eugene R. Fairweather (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 283, quoted in Placher, 145.

His claim corresponds with the apostle John's testimony as expressed in the scripture, often quoted as the foundation of Christian theology. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3: 16 – 17, NRSV).

Hosea Ballou, in 1805, in Treatise of the Atonement expresses the fatal harm the Theology of Substitutionary Atonement did to Christianity by portraying God as one whose offense was so grave that he demands nothing less than the death of Jesus to appease God's anger.¹³ Parker asks, "Do we really believe that God is appeased by cruelty, and wants nothing more than our obedience?"¹⁴

In light of these contrary theories and assertions, one must ask why Substitutionary Atonement Theology has demonstrated such longevity in Christian history. Did the religious leaders of the time consider threats the best way to bring home the message of Christianity? Did it justify victimizing certain groups of people under the name of paying for the sin? Was it justice to make it easier to demand obedience from weaker people? Or, perhaps most disturbingly, was it because this theology condoned human cruelty as a fitting way of carrying out what they perceived as God's will?

¹³ Brock and Parker, 30.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Social Gospel (Liberal Theology)

In the 19th century, the theology of social gospel gained a lot of attention. Parker writes on theology of social gospel (liberal theology):

[Walter] Rauschenbush defined sin as betrayal of the bonds of care among human beings. The root of sin is not rebellious refusal to obey God, but a deep-seated selfishness. Sin disregards the needs and well-being of the neighbor in a heedless pursuit of self-centered wants. 'We rebel against God and repudiate his will when we set our profit and ambition above the welfare of our fellows and above the Kingdom of God which binds them together.' Selfishness is more than a personal failing. It is a transpersonal evil, institutionalized in social systems that benefit some individuals while exploiting and oppressing many others.¹⁵

The theology of the social gospel, therefore, suggests that self-giving is the means of salvation. It claims that the way to save the society is by the institutionalization of generosity, the creation of social systems that distribute wealth justly and sustain the ties of community. "The kingdom will come on earth, as in heaven, if we will put aside selfishness and build the commonwealth of God together."¹⁶ In other words, the theology of Social Gospel highlights the message of Jesus to love our neighbors and views Jesus as a social reformer who confronted the oppressive rulers and risked his life to bring social reform. Jesus, in his self-giving, demonstrated the way of life for us. "No greater love has any human being than the love that sacrifices self to help and defend others."¹⁷

The reasons may be different, but both the substitutionary atonement theory and liberal theology highlight sacrifice as the highest ideal we are to present. One demands it

¹⁵ Ibid., 32.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

as a payment for the dishonor done to God, while the other points to it as the highest aspiration for us to achieve. The danger of liberal theology, Parker points out, is the fact that “in women’s lives the central sin may not be selfishness. It may be just the opposite: a lack of a sense of self.”¹⁸ This theology, by highlighting Jesus’ death as an act of self-giving love, still values dominance and submission in human relations and dehumanizes all of us by allowing one group of people to give themselves while others receive the benefit of the self-giving without comfort, understanding, or self-development.

We should not forget, Parker claims, that “Jesus’ crucifixion was a consequence of domination, not its cure. An oppressive system killed him to silence him and to threaten others who might follow him.”¹⁹ Parker goes on to say that the liberal theologians rejected the substitutionary atonement theory because it depicted God as less moral than human beings at our best. She is concerned less with the image of God, but with the victims of misused power.

Liberation Theology

While liberal theology emphasizes self-giving love, liberation theology emphasizes fighting to end oppression and injustice. According to liberation theologians, Jesus was a revolutionary activist who courageously confronted an oppressive system. As followers of Jesus, we should courageously resist oppression even at the risk of opposition.

To Parker, the problem with liberation theology is its acceptance of violence and its glorification of the crucified people of God. Whether it is voluntary or involuntary,

¹⁸ Ibid., 36.

¹⁹ Ibid., 37.

suffering people receive punishment. She insists, "Resistance is a transforming act. But it is not the abuse inflicted on resisters that brings about the transformation. It is their refusal to cooperate with injustice. Direct action saves people; not the violence of oppressors."²⁰ By focusing on the crucified people of God, they risk ignoring the selfish behaviors of the perpetrators, who continue to reap the benefits from an unjust and abusive system through violence, coercion, and exploitation.

Moral Influence Theology (Non Violent Resistance)

Moral influence theology, Parker summarizes, encourages nonviolent resistance toward the oppressors because there is power in undeserved suffering, and assumes that the passive acceptance of violence on the side of the resisters will move the perpetrators of violence to repentance. However, Parker claims:

This theology assumes every violent perpetrator has the empathy and moral conscience necessary to be moved by the suffering of others. And it makes every victim an agent of God's call to repent and accept mercy. This makes the repentance of the perpetrator more important than the suffering of the victim.²¹

Parker criticizes this theology as manipulative and evasive. There is a sense of arrogance in the suffering martyrs, and it assumes that there is no power available to the victims other than the power to elicit guilt from others. Parker insists: "Theology needs to teach us how to be for ourselves and be for others simultaneously, to hold both lives sacred."²² Also, the component of healing is missing in this theology. Nonviolent resistance may

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Ibid., 41.

²² Ibid., 42.

call it a success when, as a result of suffering of victims, a change in the unjust system happens. But what happens to the victims? Who will compensate for their loss, suffering, or even death? Often, moral influence theology neglects the victims and their needs to heal. It focuses on “the bigger victory” when we are able to change the system as a result of a few people’s suffering. In our eagerness to move on, we often either rush the victims through the process of healing, or try to compensate the victims with the reward of “the bigger change” that happened in the system. In this process, we undermine the value of the victims as human beings and their need to take the time to heal.

The need to take the time for the healing process can be seen in our own Christian Theology. Good Friday didn’t just skip over Holy Saturday and go straight to Easter Sunday. There was a whole day and night while death remained in the tomb. Rita Nakashima Brock states:

[Remembering] violence requires a descent into hell..... Remembering requires reliving what happened before it can be retrieved and put into words. After the descent, the telling of truth about violence and abuse is possible when friends or other steady witnesses listen patiently until the story is told. The telling begins the recovery, the work of spirit to save.²³

It is through the journey of embracing pain and excruciating awareness of the harm done that one can take steps toward healing. It is through the journey into the shadow that we begin to take steps toward wholeness through the process of individuation. Parker writes, “The spirituality of dying and rising promises that we will journey through anguish to consolation, through absence to presence, and through death to life because Christ rose

²³ Ibid., 146.

from the dead.”²⁴ It is through remembering, reframing, re-imagining one finds voice to retell the story as it is.

We should not mystify Jesus’ crucifixion, but see it as what it is and name it as what it is, violence done to an innocent victim. We also have to face this pain without sanctifying it or calling it a divine sanction. God never wills any of God’s children to suffer. Parker writes, “Whatever restoration we find comes always with the legacy of the harm done to us.”²⁵

Process Theology (A Relational Theology)²⁶

In the 20th century, process theology affirms God’s suffering on the cross in the person of Jesus and looks at the cross as another revelation of God. Marjorie Suchocki interprets the words the four evangelists attribute to Jesus while on the cross as signs of the expression of God’s deep felt love. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27: 46b; Mark 15: 34b, NRSV). In this agonizing cry, Jesus expresses the sense of abandonment as well as sense of trust. Suchocki writes:

The power of pain is its ability to force out all other sensibilities, claiming its own screaming reign in the soul. Pain has the power to crowd out the sense of God’s presence as hunger, thirst, and weariness could not. The cry of abandonment signals the pain of body and spirit; the force of physical pain claims full sway in the sense of Godforsakenness, even though trust continues.²⁷

²⁴ Ibid., 43.

²⁵ Ibid., 213.

²⁶ Marjorie Suchocki states, “The most explicitly relational theology is that known as process theology.” See Suchocki, God, Christ, Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology, new rev. ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 4.

²⁷ Ibid., 105.

Suchocki lists other words of Jesus on the cross: “Woman, behold your son! Behold your mother!” (John 19: 26b-27, NRSV). “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23: 34, NRSV). And Jesus’ words of salvation assurance to the thief on the cross, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23: 43, NRSV) and illuminates these words as the expressions of Jesus’ strength in God’s love:

On the cross, in the midst of Godforsakenness, Jesus still loves with the strength and insight to perceive the needs of those around him. That love embraces not only a mother and disciple, but the very ones who are killing him..... On that cross we see that the power of love extended by Jesus is the very love of God, stronger than death..... Through the cross we see not only that God’s love is stronger than death, but that God in love endures the pain of death, and that God’s love is unconquered by death.²⁸

Through the cross we meet this relational God who feels and experiences every pain and agony experienced by humanity and caused by human cruelty. Suchocki writes:

If God is in Jesus, then God reveals through him that every sin is a sin felt by God and is therefore a sin against God. Every pain is felt by God, and is therefore God’s pain. The dreadful truth revealed in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is that the world crucified God. We crucify God. Each pain we feel and each pain we inflict enters into the reality of the God who is for us.²⁹

Suchocki affirms that through suffering, God makes resurrection possible. Instead of interpreting the death of Christ as the payment for the price of our sin, relational theology highlights the mercy and grace of God in God’s identification with our pain. “God feels

²⁸ Ibid., 106.

²⁹ Ibid., 110.

us completely, in all our conditions, and through the radical love of such presence, provides us with forms of resurrection.”³⁰

Parker points out a danger of relational theology when viewed by the abuser:

[It] described a God who could feel – a relational, connected, empathetic God who suffers with us. God’s love for us was expressed in his union with Jesus in experiencing abandonment and pain. But this theology has sometimes valorized empathetic union without distinguishing it from abuse.³¹

We should be aware of a very important aspect of an abuser. “[An abuser] requires the other [victim] to feel pain and then imagines the other is himself. He finds life by externalizing his pain and then embracing the one he tortures.”³² Empathy is good, but when we feel the other’s pain, we must not seek to deprive him/her from feeling his/her own pain. “Our ability to feel for another can become an unholy bond in which the other’s obligation to feel for himself, or feel for herself, is ignored.”³³

Theology of the Crucified God

Parker summarizes the theology of the crucified God:

On the cross, God experienced the full meaning of human existence. To be human includes humiliation, betrayal, physical torment, abandonment, isolation, and the collapse of hope. On the cross God is finally, fully at one with humanity..... God knows the heart of human sorrow because God is in full union with us.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid., 111.

³¹ Brock and Parker, 198.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 197.

³⁴ Ibid., 46.

The theology of the crucified God does not minimize pain by urging us to look at the bigger picture or interpret the abuse as a blessing from God or God's way of teaching us a valuable lesson. This theology doesn't mystify or glorify human violence or interpret human cruelty as being a part of a divine plan. When we struggle in the midst of human cruelty or when we are crushed by abandonment and sorrow, God is there with us, taking every blow and every whipping we receive. Parker persists, "My objection to every theology of the cross was that it mystified violence and offered dangerously false comfort.... Theology cloaked violence and taught people to endure it.... The actual historical event of Jesus' crucifixion was neither sweet nor saving."³⁵ Instead of beautifying it we need to call the crime by its name. Jesus died on the cross because he resisted the exploitations of the political leaders of the Roman government and interfered with the corrupt practices of the organized religion led by Jewish religious authorities. By calling Jesus' dying on the cross an expression of God's love for humanity, we trivialize Jesus' pain and dress up this entire ugly incident as a part of God's divine plan. We erase both the suffering of victims and the crime of perpetrators. We repeat the violence by not owning up to it.

Then what do we do? Do we dismiss the story and symbol of cross altogether as a mistaken notion of God portrayed in Christianity?

C. S. Song, in his book, Jesus, the Crucified People, calls the cross a great, unbelievable, shameful scandal of divine magnitude.³⁶ The innocent man dying on the

³⁵ Ibid., 48.

³⁶ C. S. Song, Jesus, the Crucified People (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 80-81.

cross like a criminal was a “scandal unthinkable to the loving God.”³⁷ But instead of dismissing the whole story of redemption, Song suggests that we separate the Abba-God of Jesus and the God of the theologians and religious traditions³⁸:

The God of Jesus eats and drinks with sinners, but the God of his religion eats and drinks only with “the righteous.” The God of Jesus runs to sinners, flings arms around them and kisses them (Luke 15: 11-31), but the God of the religious authorities keeps aloof from them, despises them, and excommunicates them. The God of Jesus forgives “seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22), but the God of the official theologians condemns and punishes. The God of Jesus is Abba, the parent who creates life, renews it, and fulfills it.³⁹

The God of theologians is the God of retribution “secluded in the fortress of unintelligible doctrines and defended and protected by religious taboos and rituals.”⁴⁰ He further defines the difference between the God of love and mercy whom Jesus called Abba and the God of church authorities:

The God of Jesus is not a murderous God, creating religious victims out of believers. A murderous God is a God who demands blood from the devotees to satisfy its pleasures, commands sacrifice from them according to its whims, and confronts them with fear and punishment when they fail to conform to strict religious observances.⁴¹

Jesus addresses God as his Father, Abba, throughout the gospels, but just once he called God as God. It is when, on the cross, he cries in agony, “My God, my God, why have

³⁷ Ibid., 82.

³⁸ There is an assumption in C. S. Song’s suggestion that even the Holy Scripture was not saved from the influences of the theologians and religious leaders of the institutionalized religion. They have penetrated into the scripture as they canonized and edited the Holy Bible.

³⁹ Song, Jesus, the Crucified People, 77.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 72.

⁴¹ Ibid., 84.

you forsaken me?" (Matt, 27: 46b; Mark 15: 34b) before he takes his last breath. Why?

C. S. Song writes:

The God of the church and its theology is basically the God of retribution. On the cross it is this God who wins victory over the God of love. Jesus who bears the sins of the world must die for human beings to be forgiven and for the God of retribution to be vindicated.⁴²

C. S. Song further clarifies:

Theology such as this, although having dominated the thinking of the church and Christians for centuries, has failed to grasp the meaning of the incarnation and do justice to the deep theological insight contained in the phrase "the Word become flesh." It is the theological experiences of more and more Christians in the Third World under different historical settings in recent years that have made them realize serious defects in the traditional theology of the cross. It is necessary for us, then, to grapple once again with the cross, especially with what is known as the scandal of the cross, not as an abstract theological concept but as a historical reality related to the life of Jesus and to the lives of men, women, and children in the past and today.⁴³

To describe Jesus' death on the cross as God's plan to save the world from its sin is agreeing with the vindictive God of the very same tradition that Jesus repeatedly tried to refute in his lifetime. It is reclaiming the God of the very Pharisees that Jesus continuously challenged.

C. S. Song explicitly declared that Jesus did not seek martyrdom. "Unlike many a martyr in the history of Christianity who courted death as a way of salvation, Jesus did not rush into it."⁴⁴ Instead, Jesus struggled against his fate to a tremendous extent. Mark records his agonizing prayer in the garden of Gethsemane:

⁴² Ibid., 78.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 84.

He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me, yet, not what I want, but what you want.' (Mark: 14:33-36, NRSV)⁴⁵

C. S. Song points out the child-like faith Jesus had in his Abba God as expressed in this prayer as he trusted God as one for whom all things are possible. He also clarifies for us that Jesus' struggle was not because of the conflict between Jesus' own will and God's will or as a result of Jesus submitting his will to God's will. Rather it was his deep agony when he realized the inevitable pain he must endure. Song explains:

[Although] Jesus did not court death on the cross, he must have realized that it was bound to come because of the enmity he had aroused in the religious authorities. And now the inevitable seems to have arrived. He must have shuddered at the thought of the extreme pain of the cross. If this is what he has to face, if this is the cup he has to drink, he cannot do it alone. His prayer, then, must be a prayer of his determination to carry to the end what he set out to do three years before, what he believed to be God's will. He could have been assailed with doubts at times. He might have been tempted to take a different path to fulfill God's will. But each time he was able to have his commitment to God's will rekindled and reaffirmed. Now the last struggle with the powers of this world had begun. His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane must have been, then, a prayer of his rededication to do the will of his Abba-God. It must have also been the prayer of invocation, asking God to be with him in the ordeal he was about to enter.⁴⁶

Jesus' struggle must have been intensified when he realized that no other human being understood the gravity of his upcoming fate, illustrated three times, as his beloved disciples first succumbed to sleep, fled his side for their safety, and denied even knowing

⁴⁵ Even in the garden, as Jesus struggles with his upcoming suffering and death, notice how he addresses God as Abba.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 85-86.

him. He experienced, first hand, the act of abandonment by human beings and isolation in the world. Song further clarifies the event of cross. "Jesus died on the cross, though abandoned by the God of the religious authorities, finding peace in the loving Abba-God he had come to share with suffering men and women."⁴⁷

We cover up human brutality and put the blame on God when we describe the cross as a plan devised by God to save humanity. It was human brutality that killed an innocent human being in order to protect the established religion. Song urges us to look at the reality of the cross:

The cross is the suffering of Jesus of Nazareth and it is the suffering of humanity. The cross means human beings rejecting human beings. It is human beings abandoning human beings. It shows how human beings, in the grips of demonic powers, are inflicting injustice on each other, tearing each other apart, destroying each other. The cross is the plot of an organized religion blinded by its own power and orthodoxy and unable to tolerate those deeply and sincerely religious persons eager to restore faith in the God of love and mercy. And the cross discloses the complicity of sociopolitical powers ready to defend their self-interest at any cost, even at the expense of the law, even at the cost of the lives of those God-inspired persons faithful to the truth and devoted to love for others.⁴⁸

The cross is planned by human beings and executed by human beings in order to protect humanity's institutionalized religion and its institutionalized God. It is the symbol of ultimate evil in humanity and discloses the depth of human sin.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 98-99.

Parker echoes Song's assertion: "Jesus has been betrayed by his own tradition. A military empire murdered him. His life and work were not furthered by his death. His execution ruptured his community. Its scattered ashes were difficult to restore to fire."⁴⁹ Jesus' death on the cross is not a symbol of love we should all try to imitate. It is a symbol of human cruelty we should all try to reject. No one was saved by the execution of Jesus. It was the established religion that was saved when they crucified Jesus on the cross. Insisting that Jesus' dying on the cross is an expression of God's loving plan to save humanity from sin and an example we should try to emulate as good Christians is a dangerous message, especially for the victims of violence. This message makes the powerless more vulnerable and legitimizes the perpetrators of violence and the abusers of other human beings. Parker is adamant, "Jesus didn't have to die for us to know that God is present. He didn't have to rise from the dead for us to know that God's creative power is greater than death. Nobody has to suffer for God to be made known to us."⁵⁰

Christian theologies, throughout history, have urged us to imitate God's love, especially as that love has been interpreted as sacrificial love. Jesus' death on the cross was an expression of human cruelty, an act of self preservation carried out by institutionalized religion, not an expression of sacrificial love.

⁴⁹ Brock and Parker, 249.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 212-13.

CHAPTER 4

Before going into analysis of the Story of Shim Cheong for its theological and moral implications, let us begin with the story in its original, Pansori form. The following is a translation of the Story of Shim Cheong adapted from the version published by Baek Am. Because the original English translation of the story is problematic, I have taken the liberty of rewriting it in a form that is more easily readable. In addition, one should note that in Pansori form, this story would normally have been performed live onstage, perhaps accompanied by instrumentalists. For that reason, the story has been given a lyrical structure that reflects its original form as a piece of performance theatre.

The Story of Shim Cheong¹

1

In Dohwa village in the region of Hwangju, where the dancing butterflies fluttered with the falling flower petals and fell on the flowing waters of the Indangsu, there lived a blind man named Shim, Hak-Gyu. Shim was of a respectable noble family that had been in government service for generations. However, the family fortunes had declined, leaving him in poverty. To make matters worse, Shim himself lost his eyesight at an early age. Even so, he behaved as a member of a noble family should, carrying himself with honesty, refinement, and right etiquette. Because of this, all the people of the village spoke well of him, even those with two open eyes.

Blind Shim was married to a woman named Mrs. Gwak, a woman of wisdom, virtue, integrity and beauty. Like her husband, Mrs. Gwak behaved with decorum and virtue. She was knowledgeable in all the duties of a Korean woman: performing

¹ Korean Classical Literature Institute, The Story of Sim Cheong (Seoul: Baek Am, 2000). This is a bilingual version with Korean and English. The English translation, however, is very crude, and I have reworked it for the purpose of this project. For example, since Shim Cheong is a closer English pronunciation to the name than Sim Cheong, I have decided to spell her name as Shim Cheong. Every effort has been made to contact Baek Am Publishing Co. and Korean Classical Institute for permission to use this version of this classic Korean Folktale.

sacrificial rites, serving guests, being in harmony with neighbors, treating her husband with respect, and managing the household.

Even so, they lived in poverty, with no inheritance to draw upon and a tiny one-room cottage for their home. They ate only vegetables and drank water out of gourds, and because they had no land (nor servants to work on it) Mrs. Gwak had to work odd jobs so that they could earn a living, ranging from needlework to laundry to weaving, bleaching, and dying homespun cloth. She worked tirelessly, saving up her meager wages carefully – ten puns became one don, and then one nyang. When she had gathered up one gwan, she performed the family's sacrificial rites of ancestor veneration each spring and autumn, thus fulfilling their duties to the spirits of their ancestors. She respected her blind husband and served him steadfastly. And so, even their poverty and his blindness were unable to dampen their happiness, so much so that people from far-off villages envied and praised them.

And so they spent their years in peace and happiness, save one small thing – they had no children. And so, one day, Blind Shim called his wife and asked her to be seated.

"Madam!" he said. "Have a seat and listen to me. Every man who was born in the world marries, and many, although they have no handicap, meet wicked wives and live out their lives in misery. And yet you, my wife, have worked day and night to earn money for your blind husband without taking even a little rest. You have shown me honor wholeheartedly by offering me clothes and food lest I should be chilled by the cold or grieved by hunger. Thus my body is comfortable, yet my mind is troubled by your hardships. Let us therefore leave everything to destiny without doing painful things."

"That said, there is one thing in which I feel very regretful. You see, we are already in our forties, and we have no children, which means that when we die, there will be no one left to carry out the sacrificial rites. How could we face our ancestors in the next world, knowing that there is no one left to make offerings to their spirits? Who will be left to perform our funerals, to mark the first and second anniversaries of our death, to remember us year after year by offering up a bowl of rice and a draught of water? I feel that I will only be at peace if we have a child, regardless of gender. Even a disabled one would be enough. What do you think? Should we offer prayers to heaven at a well-known mountain, or a great temple?"

Mrs. Gwak replied, "My husband, remember the words of the sage Mencius – 'Among the three thousand impieties, to leave no children is the gravest sin.' Is there anyone who could hate a child? My sin was heavy enough that I could have been turned out of the family, and yet I have done well thanks to your generosity and kindness. Therefore, I will do everything I can, even if I have to sell my body and have my bones ground to dust. I have not spoken of this until now because I did not know how you felt in this matter. Somehow, you broached the matter first, and there is nothing I cannot do to make this wish come true."

After replying in this manner, Mrs. Gwak put her heart and soul into prayers and offerings, with everything she had earned from her wages. She had many Buddhist masses spoken, and offered fervent prayers to the gods of the household, the kitchen, and

the home. And her hard work was not wasted, for on the eighth day of April in the first year of the lunar calendar, she had a dream.

In her dream, the whole world was bright and clear, and there were good omens in the air. Five colored clouds hung overhead, and a fairy descended from heaven wearing a crown of flowers, loudly ringing jade charms, and carrying a branch bearing the flowers of the cinnamon tree. She landed with a smile, bowed, and walked to Mrs. Gwak, who was ecstatic with happiness. "I am a daughter of Seowangmo," the fairy said. "On my way to present the Lord of Heaven with the legendary peaches, I happened to meet with Okjinbija and spoke with her for a moment. Because of my delay, I was punished with exile to the human world, but I did not know where to go. But now Taesangnugun, Huto the Goddess, and Lord Buddha have directed me here. Please regard me highly." And with those words, the fairy entered Mrs. Gwak's breast.

Mrs. Gwak awoke with a start, and found that it was just a dream. She spoke with her husband, Blind Shim, and they found that he had dreamt the same dream that very night. They believed it to be a sign that their prayers for a child had been answered, and they were filled with great joy. Soon after, Mrs. Gwak began to feel the signs of pregnancy. Was this an act of Buddha, or the grace of heaven? Perhaps heaven itself was moved by Mrs. Gwak's true heart.

Mrs. Gwak took great care in her conduct, as it was believed that certain things could be harmful for an unborn child. She did not sit on slanted ground, or stand on one foot, or sit in an untidy place. She did not eat unevenly sliced food, or listen to foul language or look at mean actions. And thus she stayed well for ten months, until one day she felt the first pangs of childbirth.

"Oh, my belly! Ouch, my back!"

Her suffering frightened Blind Shim, so he went to a neighbor to call for a midwife. At the time of delivery, he said a prayer for an easy childbirth, placing a bundle of straw and some pure water into a new bowl, placed on a plate. Just then, a sweet fragrance wafted through the room like a cloud, and Mrs. Gwak gave birth to a baby daughter who was as beautiful as a fairy.

When the midwife had left the bedroom, Mrs. Gwak laid there collecting her thoughts from the labors of childbirth.

"Sir," she said to her husband, "My delivery was easy, but tell me, have I given birth to a son or a daughter?"

Blind Shim felt the child between the legs and said with a smile, "Judging from its crotch, it is probably not a son."

Even though they had hoped for any child before conceiving, they had hoped for a son during the pregnancy. Mrs. Gwak said in sorrow,

"How regretful it is that I have given birth to a daughter in my old age!!"

But Blind Shim replied,

"Don't talk that way! Even if a daughter is less desirable, remember that a bad son might bring shame upon our ancestors, and a good daughter will never make us envy a bad son! If we bring her up beautifully, with good etiquette and all the skills in weaving and sewing required of a refined lady, she can marry a good husband and have a

happy marriage and bear many children who will respect us. So don't speak like that again."

Asking the midwife to boil some rice, Blind Shim placed it on the SamShin table, folded his hands, and prayed wholeheartedly.

"All-powerful gods!" he prayed. "Move your hearts and make an agreement among yourselves! We are grateful that you have allowed my wife to easily deliver a daughter in her forties after these ten long months. How can I forget your generous favor, even after my death! I only pray that my daughter will be given the five blessings – the longevity of Dombang Sak, the morals and filial piety of Jeungja, the fortunes of Seok Sung, the talents of Banhui, and that you will bless her in every way, to grow up without a single ailment as rapidly as a cucumber or an eggplant grows, as quickly as the moon grows in the sky."

Once he had finished his prayer, he brought a warm meal to his wife's bedside and fed her. Afterwards, he began to think over what had happened, and even though his child was a daughter, he was proud and satisfied beyond measure. Although he could not see her in his blindness, he quieted her crying with his touch.

"My baby, my daughter," he said, "my daughter who is as good as a son! Neither gold nor jade can compare to your worth. You are like a cane for ten blind men, precious as perfume, a richly carved desk, and a jade lamp. You are like a little lantern with a silk shade waving in the dawn breeze, or the jewel of a daengki ribbon. I pray that you will be devoted to your parents like Wang Sang, who fished the carp from a hole in the frozen water in the dead of winter. No matter how many fields and rice paddies I may amass, they will never be better than you. No matter how precious a coral or pearl I may receive, I will never be happier than this! Can it be that the maiden Sukhyang of the Pyojin river turned into you, or that the Weaver Lady of the Milky Way river was born into this world through you? Hurray for my daughter!"

And so Blind Shim was delighted day and night, and his gladness soothed Mrs. Gwak's regret, and they all enjoyed themselves beyond measure.

2

Alas! The human condition! For life is short, and both sadness and happiness come to an end. Cruel misfortune does not have mercy on the piteous body. Mrs. Gwak, after delivering the baby, wished to have a few more days of recovery. But since she could not afford the luxury, she went out almost immediately to find work. Not even 7 days had passed after giving birth, when she went out to do the laundry for others and work the mill in the middle of a frozen winter. Eventually she became ill. Her breathing became labored, she could eat nothing, and her body was racked with pain.

"Oh, my headache!" she cried. "Oh, my back," she wailed.

This terrified Blind Shim. He called upon doctors with their medicines, chanted sutras to the gods, called upon shamans to drive the evil spirits from her body, but how could he save her from this mortal disease?

A day came when he sat beside her dumbfounded, touching her entire body.

"My dear, my darling," he cried. "Save your strength, and don't speak any words. If you stop eating and drinking, bad things will happen. Can it be that too many blessings from SamShim have attracted Jeseok's anger? Is there no way for you to escape from dying! Woe is me! If you die, what can I do with this blind body of mine, all alone in this world with no relatives to rely on? How can I care for my daughter, still wrapped in her infant clothes?"

Mrs. Gwak, however, knew that her disease was mortal. She sighed and spoke these last words, holding her husband's hands.

"Listen, my dear husband, listen to my words. We planned to grow old together for a hundred years, but it seems that my destiny is to die. I am not sad for myself, but I fear for your lot in the future. All my life, it has been my firm resolution to respect you devotedly for fear that you would be put through hardship because of my carelessness. In hot and cold weather, I earned rice and food from odd jobs, served you warm meals while I ate cold leftovers, and struggled so that you will never be cold or hungry. However, due to my destiny or to broken-off relations, it seems there is no way for me to avoid my death. And yet, if I die, who shall dress you up and serve you your meals?"

"There is no one on whom you can depend, as you are all alone without any relatives," she went on. "In my mind, I see you walking along with your wooden cane, or perhaps feeling your way with your hands, only to end up falling into a drain or onto a stone, deploring your lot. I can hear your sorrowful cries, 'Give me a meal please!' as you wander from house to house due to cold and hunger. Even a dead soul can't bear to see it. What kind of a wretched mother am I, to be unable to give my baby milk, after these long years of yearning? Who will nurse her, and dress her up in every season?"

"If I die despite my will, how can I take even one step on my last journey into the next world, blinded as I will be by all the tears in my eyes? My dear, blind husband, take ten nyuangs from the Kims in the next village over to spend on my funeral, and eat the rice in the jar after I am gone, the rice I had set aside to eat after childbirth, but which I am now never to finish."

"In the closet, you will find the official uniforms of the royal inspector, Jin, which I was embroidering. Before I die, please return these precious clothes to their rightful owner. Gwideok's Mama is my close friend, so if you ask her to nurse the baby after my death, she will not refuse you. If, by the grace of Heaven, our baby should live and learn to walk on her feet, let her walk in front of you, asking directions, and visit my grave. Then teach her by saying, 'Child, child! This is the grave where your mother rests,' so that she can meet me. Now I go into the other world, forced by Heaven's will, leaving a young child and a blind husband, praying that you will not lament so much that you harm your health, that you will take care of yourself when I am gone. I hope, in the next world, that our relationship, cut cruelly short in this life, will begin anew, and we shall live together again, without parting."

Thus saying, she turned to her baby with a sigh, put her face to its face, and clicked her tongue.

"The world is cruel, and ghosts are unsympathetic," she said. "You should have been born a little earlier, or I should have lived a little longer. Even as I give birth to you, I am dying. This makes me lament endlessly for you. What curse was visited upon us that we are to be left a dead mother and a living child between life and death? My baby, drink my last milk, and live."

Mrs. Gwak turned once more to her husband, saying, "Oh dear, I almost forgot. Call our daughter by the name of Cheong. I had prepared for her a headdress with jade beads and a pear attached to red tassels. As I put it into the closet, when our baby is able to turn over, put it on her head and remember me. I have so many more things I wish to say, but it is hard to breathe."

With these words, a blowing wind like a sigh turned into a sorrowful one, scraping along wearily, and a rain that had fallen like tears slowed into silent drizzles. After vomiting blood a couple of times, she closed her eyes and breathed her last. Alas! Mrs. Gwak had passed on to the other world.

Alas! Why can Heaven not help people with their life spans, short-lived as we are? Not knowing that she was dead, Blind Shim spoke to his wife. "My dear, not all those who are sick die! It will not happen to you. I am now going to see the herbalist and buy medicine. Set your mind at rest."

Blind Shim quickly bought medicine and came back home. He made fire in a brazier, boiled the medicine while fanning the fire, and brought the bowl into the room after squeezing its juice with a hemp cloth towel.

"My dear," he said, "sit up quickly so you can take this medicine."

He laid the bowl of medicine close at hand and helped her to sit up, when suddenly, a fright passed through his mind. He felt her body, and found that her limbs were drooping and her nostrils gave out only coldness. Finally, he knew that she was dead, and Blind Shim lost his mind and became insane.

"My dear!" he wailed. "Can it be that you are really dead?"

He cried out, beating his chest, striking his head, and stamping his feet with grief.

"Madam! If you had lived and I had died, this child would have been brought up well. But with you dead and me alive, how can I care for her? On what food can I live in needy circumstances? In the heart of the severe winter when the north wind blows, what clothes can I put on her and what food can I feed her to save her life? Our firm resolution was that we should live and die together, but you alone went into the underworld, that formidable place? When will you return? As the poet Du Bo wrote, will you return the next spring? How far is the place where you have gone, so that no one can return? Did you follow a fairy to the Yojiyeon party where the legendary peaches grow? Did you ascend to learn Taoist mating with the fairy in the Moon Palace? Did you go to make a complaint to the Two Empresses of the Imperial Mausoleum?"

Blind Shim wept and struck his head against the floor, dumbstruck in his grief. He rolled about in the dust, wailing with his face to the earth.

At this time, when the villagers in Dohwa village heard this, men and women of all ages could not help but be sorrowful. They said, "How pitiful are the circumstances of Blind Shim and the late Mrs. Gwak! What do you think of performing her funeral by

collecting from each person little by little, according to the principles of our shared community?"

Everyone agreed to these words, and attended to the funeral ceremonies. Cleaning the shroud and the coffin of poor Mrs. Gwak, they fastened them up on a new bier. They flew a banner with the deceased's name and a flag of hemp cloth at the front of the funeral procession on either side. Once the procession had departed, they carried the bier to the grave.

Even though this was the funeral of a needy family, through these united efforts with a single heart, a brilliant funeral ceremony arose, decorated by beautiful buntings of blue silk, awnings of white satin, green silk coverings, blue satin curtains with golden letters, and chrysanthemums with golden railings. On every side, to the east, west, north, and south, boys with their hair in double topknots stood wearing blue clothes. There was the blue bong in the east, the white bong in the west, the red bong in the south, the black bong in the north, and the yellow bong in the center with the scarlet threads and the bee-shaped knots and the blue dragons carved in the front and rear of the bier. Pallbearers, wearing hoods, mourning dresses, and even puttees made of raw hemp cloth, carried the bier on their backs, walking in a zig-zag pattern.

"Clang clang. . . Eowa nonmcha noho!" they cried.

Meanwhile, Blind Shim left his baby, wrapped in her swaddling clothes, in the care of Guideok's Mama and put on the funeral garments given by others, grabbing the back of the bier firmly, and managing to walk ahead being supported as if he were mad or drunk.

"Oh my wife! Please, go with me even a long journey! How cold-hearted you are! Even my child isn't important to me any more. Leave her frozen to death or starved to death. Let's go together."

"Eohwa neomcha neoho!"

As Blind Shim kept wailing and crying out, the pallbearers continued to chant a funeral song.

Poor Mrs. Gwak behaved well but died pitifully!

Eohwa nomcha neoho!

One born in this world cannot live forever and will die anyway.

Eohwa neomcha neoho!

But why could Mrs. Gwak in our village not enjoy life even up to seventy?

Eohwa neomcha neoho!

The rooster crows and dawn, the bright moon sinks over completely,

And a cold wind blows wearily.

Eohwa neomcha neoho!

Eohwa neoho, neohwa neoho!

Managing to cross over and to arrive in the selected sunlit place, they buried her deep and performed a rite of sacrifice after they had leveled the ground. When they displayed sacrificial foods, according to the customs, Blind Shim himself read a ritual

prayer he had written, full of rancor. (For although he was blind, he had been well educated before he lost his sight in his twenties.)

"Oh my wife! I married a graceful lady like you and promised to get along with you for a hundred years, but suddenly you died and now your soul is gone. You have left a suckling infant and parted forever. How can I bring her up in the future? As you started on a journey from which you cannot return, we buried you in the hill thick with pine trees and walnut trees. May you rest forever among the green mountains. I, left in this world, will never hear nor see you again. Even though I may hear a ghost crying when the moon sets over a poplar and a mountain is hollow in the deep night and ask, "Say any word," how can you be consoled? This world is shut out from the other world. Here I served wine, fruits, dried meats and rice drinks as sacrificial foods. Please, be satisfied and go back."

After finishing the prayer, Blind Shim said with a sigh,

"My dear! I will go back home, and you shall live here."

Then, rushing at a mounded grave, he fell on his head and sighed out wailing,

"Are you going to forget everything, to regard pine trees and big cone pines as a fence, a cuckoo bird as a friend and respond in singing when the night is bright with the moon and the leaves of the empress trees are swayed by the wind? Looking back on my lot, I've been an outcast of my associates, as a hawk who has lost its game of a pheasant, as an acorn in the dog food. On whom can I rely from now?"

Touching a mounded grave, he lamented frantically, and there was no one in the villagers who could help but feel mercy for him. One of them admonished him, saying,

"Don't, don't do that! Think no more of your dead wife, but care for your young child!"

Blind Shim was reluctant to calm himself down. As he turned to go, he recovered his senses enough to give bows to the villagers a hundred times with gratitude and came back home after saying goodbye to them.

3

After Blind Shim buried his wife and left her lonely in a moonlit place, he came back home helter-skelter. The kitchen was weary and the room was empty where the incense was being burned. In the hollow room he sat, aloft by himself, as the jackdaws of Mount Jiri throw a crab's claw in its beak, ruminating on his sorrow. Soon, Guideok's Mama gave back his baby whom she had taken care of while nobody was there.

When he received the baby and held it in his arms while sitting aloft by himself, his sorrow pierced the sky, and the baby started crying loudly and mournfully. Blind Shim was dumbstruck, and he tried to pacify the baby with a sigh.

"Baby, baby, don't cry! Your mother went far away. Are you crying because you are overwhelmed with sorrow from the loss of your mother? Don't cry, don't cry. What a fate you have, losing your mother only seven days after your birth, when you are still in wrappers! Don't cry, don't cry! Butterflies in sweet briars, do not be sorry for the

scattered flowers. If March comes next year, that flower shall be in bloom again. My wife went to a place from which she can never return. How can I forget her prudence and good behaviors?

"The sun sinking over the west mountain reminds me of my wife. The sound of rain in the night, overflowing the pond in fall, reminds me of my wife. The wild goose, which once flew in pairs over the drizzling, clear river, now has lost its mate and looks down at the sands by the blue sea and cries a mournful cry, 'Ttururuk Kkikkuk!' then flies off towards the north, alone. This drives me even more sorrowful! Are you also going after your beloved whom you lost? Your fate is the same as mine!"

Blind Shim managed to stay that night, though his baby was not fed and worn out. Although he lost track of time with his blind eyes as the eastern sky got bright, he soon heard the sound of a bucket in the well. Blind Shim guessed that day had come, flung the door open, and ran outside with a clattering noise and begged.

"O, woman standing by the well! I don't know who you are, but I beg you to give milk to this baby who lost her mother seven days after her birth and is now dying from hunger."

The woman replied,

"Even though I have no milk, there are many women in this village who do. If you visit them holding the baby in your arms and ask for milk, who would make little of you?"

On hearing these words, he walked on, holding the baby in one hand and holding a cane in the other, until he found a house with a young child, where he pushed open a twig gate, went in and begged.

"Whose family is this? I have something to say."

The owner stopped in the middle of cooking a meal, came out helter-skelter, and answered sympathetically,

"Your past is beyond description. How on earth have you overcome it, and what brings you here?"

Blind Shim said with tears in his voice,

"How pitiful our baby is! If you remember the affection of my wise wife, or if you have pity on this blind man, please give my baby the milk that your precious baby has left."

As he looked around in all directions and begged, even a woman with a heart made of wood or stone could not refuse to give milk, and even a wicked person could not despise him. In July, he begged to the women taking a rest in weeding in the fields,

"Please give this baby a suck!" and begged to the women who were resting while washing clothes,

"Please, suckle this baby!"

Once he had asked the women nearby, who knew his circumstances, they took the baby and fed her. Then they gave the baby back to him and said, with profound sympathy,

"Look, blind sir. If you come with the baby tomorrow and the day after, we will never let this child starve."

At these words, he replied with tears,

"You are so kind and virtuous to show us a kindness. Thus it is sure that you are one of the precious few. I pray that you will be blessed and live a long and happy life."

He gave thanks to them a hundred times and then he came back home with the baby in his arms. He talked to himself while caressing his daughter's belly.

"Ha ha, my daughter is full! Every day of three hundred and sixty days in a year shall be like today. For whose sake is this done? All these things are owed to the neighboring women. Grow up quickly to be wise like your mother and repay them for their favors."

After letting his baby lie under a coverlet, he wandered from house to house, groping his way using a cane. Regardless of the seasons, he begged and saved whatever he gathered, such as white rice and brown rice. When the markets opened every fifth day, he would go around to every market to collect coins and would grope his way home after buying rice porridge, sugar, and mussels for his baby. Anyone who saw him could not help but be sympathetic!

As he begged like this, he performed memorial services on every first and fifteenth day of the lunar month and the first and the second anniversaries of his wife's death, never missing once. As years went by, Shim Cheong grew up without an ailment, for by the grace of Heaven, she was destined to become a great figure. Time flew fast like water. Finally, at the age of six or seven, she became old enough so that she could guide her father around by holding his hand.

When Shim Chong was about ten years old, she was beautiful and extremely devoted to her father. She not only had excellent talents, but she also cared greatly about her parents. With all her efforts, she served her father's three meals every day, and cared for the memorial service of her late mother. Her piety and dedication overwhelmed the adults, and for this, everyone complimented her.

In this world, there is nothing more merciless than poverty. By the time she was eleven years old, the family's finances had become dire, and her father was suffering from the diseases of his body. On whom could this young and frail body rely?

4

One day, Shim Cheong said to her father,

"Lend an ear to me, Father. Even a crow, a creature that cannot speak, knows to bring food to its mother in its beak. Long ago, Gwakgeo was devoted to his parents and served them with meals from his heart. When his three year-old child disturbed the meals, he and his wife (after long consideration) tried to bury the child so that his parents could eat in peace. Then there was Maengjong, who through his extreme filial piety, obtained bamboo shoots to serve his parents in the middle of winter."

"As I am already over ten, why can't I offer good foods to you, even though I am inferior to these dutiful sons of history? If you, with blind eyes, walk on rough or wide roads, you are likely to be injured. If you are out in spite of the rain or storm, I am

worried that you will get ill. Therefore, from now on you shall stay home. I will manage to get food by myself."

Blind Shim said, with great delight,

"What you said is truly filial piety! I know your intention, but how shall I be comfortable if I let you go out and serve me? Please, don't say that again."

"Father," Shim Cheong replied, "please do not say such things. Jaro, though he was a well-known scholar, carried rice on his own back for a hundred lis like a common laborer to feed his parents in the year of famine. Jeyeong, long ago, sold herself to amend for her father's sin and to save his life when he was imprisoned in the capital. Judging by this, why can't I do the same thing? Don't dissuade me from this."

Blind Shim accepted this,

"Indeed, you are dutiful, my daughter! What you said is very commendable. Now, do as you please."

Shim Cheong went out to beg for food from that day forth. When the sun slanted on the far off mountains and there was smoke in the upper village, how pitiful Shim Cheong looked! She wore thin hemp cloth pants with strings around the ankles, a shirt so worn out that it was little more than a collar, a blue cotton cloth on her lower head and old shoes with worn-out heels on her bare feet, without socks. Holding an old gourd, she looked over to the opposite village. In so many mountains, not even a bird was flying, and on so many roads, not a single person was heard. A severe wind from the west blew against her like arrows. Her appearance from behind was like a crow that has lost its mother and is flapping away, forlorn and alone, in the snowy bushes. She went over stepping towards the side, warming her hands with her breath, and huddling up for warmth.

Arriving at the village on the other side, she visited to kitchens from house to house and said pitifully,

"I have no other way to serve my blind father since my mother passed away. Therefore I beg you to give just a spoonful of food from what you eat."

People were moved at this sight and willingly gave her Kimchi and Jang as well as bowls of boiled rice.

"Dear child! Come in quickly, warm yourself by the fire, and have a meal before you go!"

They said this because they felt sorry for the pitiful child at their doorstep. However, Shim Cheong replied,

"My old father in his cold room is waiting for me. How can I eat alone first?"

For she was anxious for her father's well being.

Soon, she returned home in haste. As she reached the wattle door, she asked,

"Father, aren't you cold? You must be very hungry. I've been delayed because I have been going around to lots of houses."

Blind Shim, who was feeling uneasy after his daughter left, heard her voice in gladness and flung the door open.

"Oh, my daughter, you came?"

Stretching out his hands, he clasped her wrists and said,

"Aren't your hands cold? Warm yourself at the fire pot quickly."

For parents, there is nothing more earnest and true than cherishing their own children. Blind Shim lamented with tears and sniffles.

"How heartbreaking your lot is! What good is my life, blind and useless, when I make my child undergo such a hardship?"

Shim Cheong, who had been devoted to her father, said soothingly,

"Father, don't be sad. It's natural for children to serve their parents and be dutiful. Don't be concerned so much."

And so she begged for food every day in every season. And as she grew older she earned her living by sewing and weaving to serve her father faithfully.

Time flew fast like water. When Shim Cheong was fifteen years old, she was the most beautiful woman in the country. She was sincere in filial piety and extraordinarily talented in the literary arts and in the moral arts – wisdom, righteousness, manners, knowledge, and behaviors in the Three Bonds. She was perfect in every way, and indeed she was blessed with beautiful talents from heaven. She was the best woman among women – a bong-hwang among birds and a peony among flowers.

Therefore, she won great admiration from the villagers, who would say in unison, "Maiden Shim is as wise as her mother was."

Her story spread even to far-off places, so the wife of the Prime Minister Jang Seungsang, who lived in yonder village of Mureung town, invited her to visit. On hearing the invitation, Shim Cheong asked her father,

"Father, the wife of the Prime Minister has unexpectedly sent her maid to invite me. May I go with her?"

"It is an honor for you to be asked," Blind Shim replied.

"How can you turn it down? Remember that this lady is the wife of the Prime Minister of a country, so behave yourself with care."

"Father, I have prepared food on the table for fear that you would be hungry all the while, in case I am delayed. When you are hungry, have a meal. I will come home soon."

After saying goodbye and withdrawing from the room, she took neat and easy steps, following the maid, and at last she reached the house of the Prime Minister. In front of the gate, weeping willows drooped as if they were proud of their spring colors. Inside the walls, precious beautiful flowers smelled sweet, as the Junghyang castle opened its gate. The building inside the inner gate was also magnificent with brilliant ornaments.

Reaching the stairs, she saw a lady in her fifties dressed in neat clothes, whose plumpness spoke of her blessed life. As the lady was glad at Shim Cheong's visit, she stood up to welcome her and held the girl's hands.

"Are you surely Shim Cheong? Indeed you are beautiful as I have heard!"

After letting her have a seat, the lady studied her. Cheong did not wear any adornment but her poise and natural beauty. Her figure is that of a swallow, which just came out of a bath in a crystal clear country stream, her face has the clarity of the high

moon reflected on the transparent water, and her eyes turned up like the morning star after an early rain. The fine color of her two cheeks was as if a lotus just opened its petals. As she opened her lovely red lips to speak, they were like a beautiful lovebird of Nongsan.

"Even though you don't know your previous life, you must be a fairy," the Prime Minister's wife marveled.

"You were exiled to Dohwa village, which will turn out that the fairies lost her friend on Moon Palace. When spring comes in Mureung town, flowers are in their blooms in Dohwa village. Since you were born with the spirits of heaven and earth, you must be extraordinary!"

The lady then said to Shim Cheong again,

"Shim Cheong, listen to me. My husband has already passed away and my three sons have gone to Hanyang to serve as government officials. I have no other children or grandchildren, so I have no one to talk to. My only company is the candle in my lonely empty room and the classics I've read throughout the long winter nights. Considering your narrow circumstances (especially for the descendant of a noble family), I hope you will be my foster daughter. I will teach you not only weaving, but also the scholarly pursuits, and I shall find you a husband worthy of my own daughter, and you will give me comfort in the latter days of life. What do you think of this?"

Shim Cheong answered calmly,

"My ill fate caused my mother to pass away only seven days after my birth. So my old father, a blind man, wandered around to beg for milk while I was wrapped in his arms. Finally, he managed to bring me up like this, but I had a lasting regret of not knowing my mother's appearance and manners. I have respected others' parents who remind me of my own parents. Today I am delighted and grateful that the noble lady of the Prime minister wants one of my humble birth to become her foster daughter. Your benevolent favor will bring wealth and honor to me, but who will dress up my blind father every season, and who will cook his meals? Everyone has a filial duty, but my debt to my parents is beyond comparison. Hence, I can't part with my father."

Shim Cheong could not go on speaking, for she was choked with tears, and the tears ran down to wet her jade-like face as if peach blossoms were being wet by the drizzle of a spring breeze. The lady listened with admiration and commended her, saying,

"It is you that Heaven acknowledges! This silly old woman failed to think about it."

Time passed, and soon it became dark. Shim Cheong stood up, saying to the lady,

"Thank you Madam. I am glad and delighted that I have spent the day with you. It is time to go, for it grows dark."

With tender affection, the lady generously gave her silks, trinkets and foods, and sent a maid to guide her home.

When they parted, the lady said,

"Shim Cheong, listen to me! Do not forget me, and remain faithful as a mother to a daughter."

"I will follow your words as you have said, with your kind hearted treatment," Shim Cheong replied. And after saying goodbye, Shim Cheong came back home.

5

Meanwhile, Blind Shim was sitting all alone, looking forward to seeing his daughter return from Mureung town. He was dying with hunger, and the room was freezing. He could hear birds fly off somewhere to sleep, and the bell ringing in a remote temple, so he guessed that it must be getting dark. He sighed,

"My daughter, Cheong should have come home. Doesn't she know that it is getting dark? Is the lady holding her up, or is a cold rain or a snowstorm stopping her from coming, so as not to walk through the cold? My daughter used to walk through rain storms through her devotion to me."

All night, he waited, but Shim Cheong did not come back. If he heard a bird fly by, he cried out,

"Cheong, are you home?"

A rustle in the fallen leaves, and he shouted,

"Cheong, is it you?"

It soon became dark, and the lonely landscape sank into silence. Feeling choked up and lonely, Blind Shim set out to wait for his daughter, grasping his cane.

When he walked outside the brushwood gate, Blind Shim slipped on a slope and fell into a stream with a splash! His whole face was covered with mud, and his clothes were wet. For all his efforts to get out of the water, he only sank deeper. The roaring water all around him filled him with terror, and he cried out for help.

"Is anybody there? Help me!"

Soon, the water was up over his waist.

"Oh, no, I am dying!"

The water gradually reached his neck.

"Heophu, heophu. I am dying!"

No matter how loud he cried out, nobody came to help. Who could take him out of the water? Just then, the abbot of Mongunsa Temple came down to the benefactors' houses in order to fix and rebuild the temple, carrying a list of sacrificial offerings over his shoulder. His face looked like the white jade of Mount Hyeongsan, and his eyes were like the waves of the Sosang river. With his ears dropped and his dangling arms reaching his knees, he wore a gamut woven with horsehair and a bamboo gat pulled over the back part of his head. His golden ring that signified that he was a high rank official was attached over his ears, his Buddhist monk's robe of fine hemp cloth was decorated with a red cloth, and a silver dagger made of copper and nickel hung loosely on his coat string. Wearing a Buddhist rosary of one hundred and eight beads around his neck and a short rosary on his wrist, he was walking up on his Sosang bamboo cane with its twelve iron rings.

This monk was not Seongjin who visited the Dragon Palace to inquire after the Dragon King's health under the order of Yukgwang and drank too much wine and flirted with the Eight Fairies on a stone bridge in the spring breeze, nor was he Samyeongdang who said,

"I had my hair cut to get out of this world and left my beard to show I am a manly man."

On his way back, a green mountain looked dark and the shiny moon rose over the snow. When he was going up along the narrow road heaped with stone, reeling to and fro, he heard a sorrowful cry for help carried on the wind, so he stopped his steps.

"What happened? What is this cry? Is this the cry of Yang Tajin at the dusk of Maoyeok or the cry of So Jungrang Mu who parted from her son in the cold wind of the North? What is this cry?"

Searching for the origin of the sound, he found that a man had fallen into the stream and was almost drowned. In amazement, he hurriedly took off his bamboo gat and robe on the ground, threw away his bamboo cane, and slipped off the bands around his knees and ankles, and his socks. Rolling up the legs of his quilted pants, he walked into the stream in long steps like a white heron stalking a fish. Then he grabbed Blind Shim's thin waist, taking him out while shouting

"Yeocha!" and let him sit by the water. It was then that he found that he had rescued Blind Shim, a man whom he was familiar with.

"Huh, huh, what happened?"

Blind Shim asked, collecting his thoughts,

"Who are you that saved my life?"

The monk replied,

"I am the abbot of Mongunsa Temple."

"Right! Buddha has saved my life. I will not forget the grace of Buddha who saved me from death."

The abbot guided Shim indoors, taking his clothes off and dressing the poor man in dry clothes. Then he asked why Shim had fallen into the water. Blind Shim told him the whole story in detail, bemoaning his lot.

When he had heard this, the monk said to him,

"Lord Buddha has miraculous powers, and there is nothing that cannot be settled. If you donate three hundred bags of rice and pray with all your heart, you can recover your eyesight during your life time and be a normal person like the others."

On hearing these words, Blind Shim said with delight (not thinking of his circumstances),

"Dear monk! Write down my name on your list, along with three hundred bags of rice as an offering."

The monk laughed.

"I can write that down, but in your circumstances, you cannot afford three hundred bags of rice."

Blind Shim replied angrily,

"Look, you are a great monk but do not recognize me! Who dares to make an empty promise to the omnipotent Buddha! If so, I would become a cripple on top of my blindness. You, great monk, do not look down on me too much! Write down my name, or I will attack you with a sword!"

The monk laughed, and wrote at the top of his list.

"Shim Hakgyu, three hundred bags of rice."

After he had written this down in large letters, he said goodbye and went back to the temple.

Once the monk had left and he had calmed down, Blind Shim thought over his actions and regretted his rashness, realizing that he should have left well enough alone, so as to not cause more future problems. Sitting by himself, he cried out,

"If my good intentions become sin, what shall I do?"

All kinds of worries occurred to him, and he wailed aloud, lamenting his lot.

"The world is merciless! On top of my narrow circumstances, I lost my eyesight, which prevents me from distinguishing the sun and the moon and seeing the faces of my beloved wife and daughter. If my wife had been alive, there would have been no worry about meals. We live hand to mouth by my young daughter working in others' households. What kind of arrogance prompted me to promise three hundred bags of rice as an offering, an impossible sum no matter how hard I ponder? What shall I do? Though I sell all the jars and dishes we own, it will not buy even one bowl of grain. Though I sell the wardrobe, it will not earn more than five nyangs. Even if I tried to sell the house, no one will buy a house that cannot give shelter from the wind and rain."

"Even if I were to try and sell my body, no one will buy a blind man. Some are born with a good fate and have healthy bodies without any disability, boundless grain, and sufficient property that will never run out. What did I do to deserve this lot? Oh, woe and sorrow. Oh, dear!"

As she came home, Shim Cheong could hear her father wailing. She rushed inside, followed by the prime minister's maid, and flung the door open.

"Father!"

Seeing him crying, she rushed to him in astonishment.

"Oh my, what has happened? You must have come out of the gate in order to meet me. The clothes you took off are soaked, what hard times have you undergone? Oh my! How cold you are, and how distressed you feel."

Asking the prime minister's maid to start a fire, she hurried about to cook a meal, drying her tears with the end of her skirt, and setting the table in front of her father.

"Father, please come and eat."

But Blind Shim turned it down, saying only,

"I won't."

"Why?" Cheong asked.

"Do you feel ill? Do you hold a grudge against me for my delay?"

"No."

"Are you anxious?"

"You don't need to know."

"Father, how can you say that? I've relied on you, and you on me. You have discussed everything with me, big and small. Now, for what reason do you tell me, 'you don't need to know?' I am sad that you cannot be frank with me, even if I am not a filial daughter."

As she started to snifle, Blind Shim said, startled,

"My baby, baby, don't cry. I have no reason of hiding the truth, but I thought that if you knew you would worry because you are so filial. This is why I haven't told you."

"Some hours ago, on the way to meet you, I fell into a stream and almost drowned. The abbot of Mongunsa Temple, however, saved me and asked me my circumstances. With sorrow welling up within, I told him my whole story in detail. At my words, the monk informed me, 'Nothing is more miraculous than the Buddha of Mongunsa Temple. If you make an offering of three hundred bags of rice, you can recover your eyesight.' I put down my name in anger, not considering our poor circumstances. It's impossible, and so I now regret my actions."

Shim Cheong replied with a smile,

"If you regret it, it can't be a whole-hearted prayer. If you really want your eyesight, I will try to prepare three hundred bags of rice as an offering at any cost."

Blind Shim replied,

"No matter how hard you may try, you're not likely to raise even one hundred bags of rice in our narrow circumstances."

"Father, don't say that. According to the ancient lessons, Wang Song broke through the ice to get a carp through the hole, and Maengjong got bamboo sprouts in the snow after weeping in the bamboo forest. Considering these stories, I might move Heaven by my best devotion even though I am inferior to these ancestors in their extreme filial piety. So don't trouble yourself about it."

Later that same day, Shim Cheong cleaned up the back yard and built an altar out of yellow soil and placed eight taboo ropes on either side. After she placed a bowl of pure water on a plate and held up incense burned on the Great Bear table, she bowed down twice and knelt with folded palms.

"The sun, the moon and stars! God of land, and gods of all directions! Buddhas of all the heavens, and Shakamuni! Take pity on my lot. You created the sun and the moon for the same purpose as a person's eyes. If there is no sun and no moon in this world, how can a person distinguish things? My father has gone blind in his twenties so that he can't see anything. My father's sin, I take on myself. Please give him back his eyesight so that he can meet the wife given to him by Heaven, and bless him with five blessings of wealth, sons, and longevity."

Shim Cheong prayed day and night, and as a result, Heaven was touched by her true heart and suggested the course to take.

One day, Gwideok's Mama, who had been her nurse, came to see her.

"Miss, I've seen an odd thing."

"What have you seen?"

"Though I do not know who they are, a group of men are going around saying that they will buy a virgin of fifteen years of age, regardless of the price. How crazy they are!"

Shim Cheong was delighted by these words.

"Is this true? If so, call in an old decent man among them and bring him here in secret."

Gwideok's Mama went out, and before long she brought one of the strangers back to Shim Cheong's house. Shim Cheong let her nurse ask the reason why he planned to buy a girl, and he said,

"We are from Hwangseong. We have sailed ten thousand lis in trading, and there is a place called Indangsu at the junctions of the waterway where many ships are destroyed. But if we sacrifice a virgin of fifteen years of age and perform a sacrificial rite, we can have a safe journey of ten thousand lis without any incident, not to mention good business. Hunger can make a criminal out of anyone, which is why I have come to buy a human. If there is a virgin for sale, we'll pay any price."

Once she had heard this, Shim Cheong stepped forward.

"I am of this village. Since my father cannot distinguish between things because of his blindness, I have prayed to Heaven. A little while ago, the abbot of Mongunsa Temple said that if my father makes an offering, he'll recover his eyesight and see all things. Because of our poor circumstances, I cannot afford the rice. Therefore, I would like to have my wish come true by selling you my body. What do you think of buying me? Am I not suitable, for I am fifteen years old?"

At this, the sailor was choked with pity. Since he could not face Maiden Shim, he quietly stood for a while with his head down. Finally, he said,

"Hearing what you have said, your commendable and exemplary filial piety is beyond comparison."

After these words of admiration, he said,

"Our business is urgent. I will accept your offer."

"When are you going to set sail?" Shim Cheong asked.

"The fifteenth of next month, so keep that date in mind."

Once the deal had been settled, the sailors sent three hundred bags of rice to Mongunsa Temple that very day. Maiden Shim forbade Gwideok's mama to let out any word one hundred times over. Finally, she went to see her father.

"Father?"

"What is it?"

"I have sent three hundred bags of rice to Mongunsa Temple."

At these words, Blind Shim asked with his eyes open wide and shining,

"What do you mean? Where did you get three hundred bags of rice that you had sent?"

Before this time, she had never hidden the truth within her filial heart, but this time, she lied to her father for the first time in her life.

"The wife of the Prime Minister in Mureung town said to me, 'Be my foster daughter,' but I turned it down because you are alone. When she was told that you had

made a vow, the lady offered the rice herself and I sent it to Mongunsa Temple. In other words, I was sold her as her foster daughter.”

Not knowing the truth of the matter, Blind Shim stood and laughed loudly in delight.

“Aha, how nice! Do you know when she is coming to take you?”

“The fifteenth of next month.”

“Well, though you and I will be apart, it will be all right for me to live. Uh! This thing has gone well.”

After soothing him with her words, Shim Cheong thought about the situation over and over. This caused tears to gush from her eyes. The thought that one born in this world should die before the age of sixteen, not living her life to its fullest, and parting from her father forever through death, made her lose her mind. She lost the will to work and stopped eating and drinking. Even when these concerns left her for a while, they soon returned upon reflection.

“It is no use crying over a spoiled net, or an arrow that has already been shot. Who will help my father to get dressed after I die? While I am still alive, I would like to make my father new clothes for every season.”

She wrapped all the clothes for each season tightly and put them into the closet. She bought and hung up a new gat and a manggeon. Then she waited for the fateful day.

Finally, only one day was left.

It was almost midnight, when the Milky Way is declining and even the candlelight grows dimmer. No matter how much she tried, Shim Cheong could not calm herself down. Finally, she took a needle and thread in her hands to mend her father's socks for the last time, but soon her tears gushed out ceaselessly from her innermost heart and the cries from her sorrow welled up within her. However, she only sobbed inside, lest her father should hear her crying. She put her face to her father's face and touched his hands.

“Tonight is my last night of supporting my father. Once I die, it will be as if he has lost his limbs. On whom should he rely? How heartbroken my father must be! Even before the age of discretion I begged for food, but now if I die he is sure to be a beggar. How many sharp looks and mistreatments will he suffer? Even if I part from him after I support him until he is a hundred years old, my sorrow will be boundless. How sad is the separation in this circumstance! There has never been such a thing in the world before.

“Though my father is in needy circumstances and has tried to live alone with empty hands, who will wait on him every morning and evening. Even if he died after suffering, who will mourn for him as there is no child? Who will set a table for him, even a bowl of rice and a cup of water on his funeral, the first and second anniversaries of his death, and the annual memorial services? My fate is wicked in all respects! I lost my mother before I was seven days old, and now I am about to lose even my father. Such a thing can never happen again! There have been many separations between loved ones, but while they are alive, they can hear and meet each other again. But this separation

between me and my father is through death, so how could I ever hear from my father or meet him again?

"My late mother is in the underworld, and I will die in the water. If I should want to meet my mother after death, it will be impossible for us to meet each other because the water palace in the ocean is far from the underworld in the earth. Though I should travel to the underworld by asking the way, how would she recognize me, and how could I recognize her? Though I should meet and recognize her when she inquires after my father, what could I say to her? If the night stays in the Hamji Lake and the rising sun in the Busang Tree, I could see my heavenly father once more. But who can stop time from passing by?"

6

Cruel time passed by, and a rooster crowed, heralding the dawn. Shim Cheong said to herself, dumbfounded,

"Rooster, rooster, don't crow! When you crow, the day breaks, and when the day breaks, I die. It is not sorrowful for me to die, but how can I leave my lonely father behind?"

When she had stayed up all night weeping sadly and the morning light started to appear in the East, she opened the door to cook breakfast to her father and found the sailors already there. They said, hesitatingly,

"Today is the day we sail. Go and get ready."

When she heard this, tears sprang out in her eyes and her throat was choked. Again she went outside to the brushwood gate.

"Look, sailors, I have been informed of today's sailing, but my father doesn't know it. If you will allow a delay for a moment, I will leave after serving my father the last breakfast and explaining my departure."

Feeling pity for her, they accepted.

"Do as you wish."

With that, she entered the house in tears, cooked a meal, and then set a table in front of her father. She sat across from him, picked up a salted fish on his spoon to let him eat as much as he could, and placed rice wrapped with lettuce into his mouth, saying,

"Father, eat a lot."

"Yes, I will!" he replied.

"Today the side dishes are especially good. Did someone perform a sacrificial rite?"

Dumbfounded, she sobbed in silence. Hearing the sobbing, he asked,

"My baby, are you sick? You probably caught a cold. What is the date today? It is the fifteenth, isn't it?"

They say that Heaven's law between parents and their offspring is significant. That being so, how could heaven not have sent a sign through dreams? He told her of his dream from last night.

"Dear child, I had a dream last night. You went by carriage to a place far away. Carriages are for noble persons, so today, I guess, the lady in Mureung town will take you away in a sedan chair."

When she heard this, she knew that it was a sign of her death. Although she was full of sorrow, she tried to set his mind at ease.

"That is a great dream."

With that, she cleared the table and lit his tobacco pipe for him. Then she washed her face, removing the traces of her tears, and changed her clothes. Turning towards the back yard quietly, she opened the door of the family shrine, set up offerings of fruits and drinks, and wailed bitterly.

"This disobedient daughter, Shim Cheong, was sold to the merchants from Namgyeong as a sacrifice to Indangsu to open her father's eyes. Though I die, let him recover his eyesight so that he can get a good spouse and good children who can preserve the rites of sacrifice for our ancestors."

After praying like this, she said, sobbing,

"Once I die, who should open and close this shrine, who should set the table with sacrificial food on the four holidays of Dongji, Hansik, Dano and Chuseok, and who will burn the incense with two bows? Unfortunate ancestors! My poor father has no relatives and he lives destitute in blindness and poverty. There is no one he can rely on. How can I die and forget my father?"

With that, she ran out with a thumping noise, standing in front of her father and plumping down.

"Father!"

After calling him, she fainted without saying word.

"My child, what happened?" Blind Shim asked in consternation.

"Has someone found fault with you because you are the daughter of a blind man? Do you have a stomachache? What happened? Tell me even a word!"

Collecting her mind, she said,

"Father."

"Yes!"

"I am a disobedient daughter who has hidden the truth from you. Who is there that would have given me three hundred bags of rice? In fact, I was sold to the sailors from Namgyeong for the rice and I'm supposed to go to Indangsu as an offering. Today is the day they set sail. This is the last time you will see me."

It was said that extreme sorrow can make people feel choked. Blind Shim was so choked that he could not cry, but could only go mad.

"Alas, what happened? Why, Choeng! Is it the truth or a joke? What nonsense! If I had recovered my eyes where you were alive, it would certainly be good, but if you die, what good is it?"

"Since your mother died, I've brought you up with begged milk from house to house in spite of my blind eyes and I wandered carrying you in my arms. Now that you grew up well I set my cares aside. But now what are you saying? I could buy you by selling my eyes but what good is it if I buy my eyes by selling you? How unfortunate my

lot is! Losing my wife, now losing a child. Why should I become the most unfortunate of the four destitutions?

"You sailors! To buy a girl for a sacrificial victim cannot be accepted anywhere no matter how important your trade is. Rascals! The wisdom of Heaven and knowledge of spirits are manifested in this world, so how can you avoid disaster? How could you entice a blind man's only daughter, who is indiscreet and young, without my knowledge? Rice, money, recovery of my eyesight, I hate all of them. How cruel, ill-bred bastards! Don't you know the ancient lessons?

"Long ago, in the seven years' severe drought when people decided to sacrifice a human victim, the generous King Tang said to them, 'It is for the people that I pray. If you want to pray by sacrificing a human being, I'll take his place.' So the king in person became a sacrificial offering. Having his hair, fingernails and toenails cut and tying a sash around his waist, he prayed in the wide field of Sangrim. This brought rain throughout the land for a thousand li distance. Therefore it doesn't matter if I take her place. You bastard, kill me!

"With all the lasting sorrows and regrets in my life, I want to die. I die! If I die now, you'll never survive. You, the ignorant illiterate! If you kill me, you'll be punished by laws and regulations."

Blind Shim shouted proudly in a loud voice gnashing his teeth and exerting himself to die. Shim Cheong got hold of father.

"Father, Father! It isn't their fault. Don't blame them."

Grasping each other and rolling over, father and daughter wailed. The people of Dohwa looked on in sorrow. All the sailors shed tears. One of them proposed a plan.

"Look, captain! Not to mention Maiden Shim, who is a dutiful person approved by Heaven, see how poor Blind Shim is. According to an old saying, 'Many a little makes a mickle,' let us all contribute food lest he should starve for the rest of his life."

All of them consented with nodding.

"You can say that again!"

When they had finished their collection, they brought to Blind Shim three hundred nyangs of money, one hundred bags of white rice, and a load of cotton and hemp cloths.

"With three hundred nyangs you can buy a dry field, and lease it to a faithful man so that he can cultivate the land. Fifteen bags of white rice, you can spend it as food for this year. The remaining eighty bags you can loan out every year and live off the interest. With each load of cotton and hemp you can make clothes for each season."

While all this was going on, the wife of Prime Minister Jang in Muerung town sent a maid to the town upon hearing that Shim Cheong was going to Indangsu as a sacrifice victim.

"The rumor says that Shim Cheong in Dohwa village is going to die. Hurry to her and bring her here before she leaves."

The maid, given the order, came to Shim Cheong and delivered the message. So Shim Cheong went over to Mureung town along with the maid. The lady came out and held Shim Cheong's hands with saying in tears,

"How cold-hearted! I've regarded you as my own child since I met you but you have forgotten me. I was told that you are going to die to recover your father's eyesight. Your filial heart is admirable, but it shouldn't be your death that makes a miracle. Why didn't you tell me before? If you had needed the rice I would have given it to you. Why are you so indiscreet?"

Leading Shim Cheong into the room, the wife of Prime Minister Jang had her sit down. Soon the lady began to persuade her. "I will give you the three hundred bags of rice, so pay the sailors back and never think such an absurd thing again."

Hearing this and thinking for a while, Shim Cheong replied calmly,

"It's no use regretting that I've not reported to you from the beginning. But how should I covet others' property when I pour out my soul for my own father's sake? If I give the rice back, the soldiers will suffer an unexpected mishap. In addition, if I break the deal after agreeing to be sold for the rice, how can I save my honor? I do know that it's rather undutiful for me to die leaving my old father behind, but it's Heaven's will, which I cannot avoid. I'll repay for your lofty grace and merciful words when I go to the underworld."

At her words, the lady was astonished. Looking into Shim Cheong's solemn face, the wife of Prime Minister could do nothing but cry and hold her hands.

"As I have regarded you as my own child with affection, not to see you even for a moment becomes a regret that overwhelms me with worrying about you, so I don't have a heart to let you die and to outlive you. If you can stay a little, I'd like to summon a painter to paint your figure as you are. Then I can see you again and again for the rest of my life. So wait a moment."

The lady demanded her maid to summon a painter in haste. She told the artist,

"Painter! If you exactly draw Maiden Shim's face, her shape, her clothes from top to toe and her sorrow stricken look with heart and soul, I'll reward you handsomely. Therefore draw with all your heart."

Taking a hanging scroll, the painter first dried it in the sun. Then, holding an ink stick in his hand, the painter took a close look at Maiden Shim, sketched her and started to paint with paintbrushes in all sorts of colors spread out in front of him. He painted her hair in brilliant blue like an orchid, her fine face like white jade, her fair figure soaked in sorrow, her thin hair and fine limbs. Spreading the scroll it seemed as if there were two Maiden Shims standing next to each other.

The lady stood and embraced Shim Cheong's neck with her right hand and touched the picture with the left hand. Then she wept loudly, and Shim Cheong said, weeping,

"You must have been my mother in a previous life. How could I leave you now when I have a chance to serve you once more? I can't stop worrying about you. I want to offer a poem written with my hands. If you hang it on the wall and read it, it'll do good."

Delighted, the lady put out a brush and an ink stone, Shim Cheong began to write a poem with the brush. As she wrote, her letters became studded with tears of blood. The blood drops looked as if they were fragrant flowers and bloomed in clusters.

*To live, to die, both are merely pieces of a dream.
Why do I miss my beloved and shed tears?
The most heart-rending thing in the world is
That the one will not return when green spring comes.*

The lady said in astonishment.

“Your writing is as good as that of the heavenly immortals. Perhaps this journey is not your will but the calling of Heaven.”

Fastening another scroll up, the lady wrote down a poem at a stretch.

*As a storm without cause, the soul of Yanddae
Blew a noted flower off into the mouth of the sea.
Heaven surely knows its exile into human world,
And why the innocent father and daughter have stopped their affectionate favor.*

Maiden Shim received it with two hands, and she treasured this poem as she said goodbye with tear-filled eyes. Who is there who would not wail at this sight?

As Shim Cheong came back, Blind Shim rushed at her and wept bitterly, hugging her neck.

“Go with me. Go with me! You can’t go alone. Now let’s share our life and death. You can’t go on, leaving me behind. If you have to become a prey for fish, both you and I will be together.”

Shim Cheong entreated with holding his hands and shedding tears.

“Why should I want to break off the connection between you and me, and why should I die? This disaster is due to my lot, because one’s life span is limited. In view of my obligation as a child I can’t leave you if it is not Heaven’s will. Please, do not remember this undutiful daughter, Shim Cheong. I hope you’ll recover your eyesight so you can see the bright world and get married to a good woman who will give birth to children for the preservation of our family line.”

Blind Shim jumped in astonishment.

“My goodness! Don’t talk that way! Why should this tragedy happen to me if I am destined to have a wife and children? You can’t go forsaking me!”

Shim Cheong let the villagers seize her father and force him to sit. She said in tears,

“Villagers, I am going to die leaving my lonely father behind and relying on your kindness. Please take care of my father.”

And so she said goodbye and turned away. Soon everyone in Dohwa village, young and old, men and women, wailed and stamped their feet. Shim Cheong shed tears as she followed the sailors. She held her skirt train tightly in her hands, her hair in tangles with a few stray hairs drooped beneath her ears, the collar of her dress soaked with bloody tears.

While she walked, losing her mind with grief, she said toward the opposite house,

"The eldest child of the Kim family. You and I are of the same age, so we grew up together on either side of the fence. We were supposed to enjoy a good time, sharing joy and sorrow forever with sisterly affection. However, I have to leave this world first. This is so regretful! I can't help dying due to my innate life span, but my lonely father will pine away, his health fading. When I have become a water spirit after I am gone, please serve my father with all your heart, if you remember me!

"The youngest of the front house, with whom will you sew and embroider? Do you remember the time that you and I played on the swing at the night of Dano, the fifth of May last year? I told you to play geolkyo in Chilseok, the seventh of July this year, but this is now impossible. While I pass away for my father's sake, please soothe his laments, if you remember me. The affection between us is such that your parents are mine, and mine is yours. While I made friends with you, you have never paid deference. Therefore I'll repay you for your sincere heart after I die, and so will my father on the day when we meet again in the underworld."

7

The bright sun had gone and the black clouds spread over the sky, for Heaven itself knew where she was going. Drops of rain fell down like tears, and the flowers in their glory withered, losing their colors. The trees of the blue mountain wore a gloomy air, and the willows, drooping over the blue water, seemed to share the sorrow. What is in your heart, crying oriole? Though I do not know your deep regrets, can you perhaps surmise my wailing heart?

Suddenly, a cuckoo cries out, 'gwichokdo,' and 'bulyeogwi,' on the lonely moonless mountain. How can you live on after crying like that? Even though you cry 'Bulyeogwi' on a branch, how can a body sold for a price come back home?

A flower was blown by the wind against her face, so she looked into it. This reminded her of Wang Yu's poem. The fallen flowers on the mountain must have been dropped not by their will but by the wind.

"As an old saying goes, a beauty is to be short lived, my lot is like dropping flowers. My death isn't my will but it's no use blaming the others for this fate."

She took a step, burdened with tears, and she turned back. Soon, she was ready to set out. Before her, she could see the winds and the waves in the path to the world of the dead. When she reached the riverside, the sailors rushed to place the gangplank, helped her go up, and let her have a seat. Soon they left for Indangsu, weighing the anchor, setting all sails, and thumping a drum.

While the ship flew floating in the middle of the sea, the boundless waves spread in the vast ocean, sea gulls flew overhead, and wild geese fell on the sands. Music rang out in the distance, but nothing could be seen but green willows.

Passing by Bong-hwang pavilion, they reached the Shimyang river, where Baek Nakcheon had gone and the sound of the lute had ceased. Shall I pass by the Jeokbyeok river? Though the scenery that So Dongpa spoke of remained as it was, where was Jo Jo who had taken the world by storm? In the deep night when the moon set and birds cried, they stopped the ship at Goso pavilion and heard the bell of Hansan Temple as far as there.

Crossing the Jinhoe river, wine sellers were singing the song of Hujeonghwa, not knowing the lamentation of the national ruin, while the moonlight slanted among the branches of trees on the sands in the evening. They sailed into the Sosan river, where a building called Akyang tower floated high up on the lake. Looking toward the southeast, there could be seen the deep mountains of Kingdom of Oh and the trees of Kingdom of Cho. The bamboos soaked, with tears, harbored the grief of Two Empresses, the rising moon over Mt. Musan reflected in the Dongjeong lake, and the color of the sky shone blue over the mirror-like waves. The smoke of Mt. Chango sank in the Imperial mausoleum with cares. A monkey that was wandering and looking for its babies cried bitterly in the valley of mountain. How many exiles and poets had you seen?

After seeing the Eight Scenes of the Sosang river in the ship, Shim Cheong went to one corner where she felt the fragrant wind with the sound of her jade bracelets. Two faces of unknown women appeared, surrounded by bead curtains.

"Maiden Shim! Don't you know me? When our husband, Yuussi passed away during his pilgrimage through the southern area on the slope of Mt. Chango, both of us hopelessly shed tears of blood in the bamboo forest of the Sosang river. This made every branch of bamboos speckled with our bitterness. If Mt. Chango collapsed and became a plain and the Sosang River dried up, the traces of our tears on the bamboos would be erased. We couldn't complain of our lasting regrets, but we have heard that you were extremely devoted to your parents. Though it has been a thousand years since the Emperor Sun died, is the song 'South Wind' still played on the five-string harp? Have a safe journey of ten thousand lis for several days and come back!"

After they suddenly vanished, Shim Cheong thought to herself,

"This must be the Sosang river. It's very mysterious for them to say 'come back' to me when I am going to die."

Some time afterwards, two unknown men came out to the side of the lake. The man in the front had the characters of a prince though his clothes were humble. This surely showed that he had fallen on hard times. He said between sobs,

"It's heartbreaking and resentful of me to be deceived by King So of the Kingdom of Jin, ending up being confined in Mugwan for three years. Finally I became a soul that could only miss my country but not return! My bitterness turned me into a cuckoo. I would take delight in hearing an iron hammer in Bangrang Temple and just dance hopelessly on the Sosang lake under the moonlight!"

The other man behind him had a pallid complexion and a scrawny body.

"I am the poet named Gulwon from the Kingdom of Cho. When serving King Hoe, Jaran slandered me so I drowned myself in order to clear my sorrowful heart. How pitiful my king is! Can I serve him after his death? As the perpetual regrets resided I served like this. Now you that are about to die with your filial duty I came out to soothe you. I hope you have a safe journey of ten thousand lis on the blue sea."

Shim Cheong thought to herself,

"It's very odd that the souls who have been dead a thousand years are still alive enough to be seen. It's probably the sign of my death."

And she lamented bitterly.

How many nights on the water and how many days in the ship?

As the months slip by like a wave,

An autumn wind blows chilly in the evening

And the whole sky is wide and far

The crimson sunset glow floats along with a lone sea gull,

And the sea is the color of autumn along the long sky.

"On the riverbank the ripening oranges looked like scattered gold, and the flowers of the reeds waving in the wind looked like fluttering snow. When the slender willows of the Sinpo harbor withered and a gentle breeze blew, the fishermen in hardships hung lamps high in their boats and responded with boating songs. Only sorrow swelled up, the peaks of green mountains by the sea seemed to have summits like the blades.

"Sadder than Songok's song, 'On Lonely Autumn', 'The sun sets toward the wide sands and autumn is still far away. Who should lament for Two Empresses.' Though I'd like to die earlier, the sailors are watching over me. For me to be carried alive in the ship, it seems that the country of my death is still far off."

8

When the ship reached Indangsu, they were forced to drop anchor and take down sail. A storm rose up, and the ship thrashed about like a fish fighting against a dragon, shedding sails, an anchor, an oar, and a rudder. The stormy wind blew and deep fog lay over the water, but the remaining distance was still over ten million lis through dark surroundings, with dusk in the sky over the dreary earth. Huge waves struck the ship, and within a few moments, they were all in mortal danger. The captain, seized with fear, prepared to make offerings to the spirits.

They cooked rice, butchered their big pig and held it up on the table with a large dagger. And they sacrificed a big cow with wine, which was placed between three colors of fruits and five colored sweets. And then they let Shim Cheong take a bath, dress herself up neatly and sit down on the prow. The chief began to make an offering with beating a drum with drumsticks in each hand, 'boom, boom, boom!'

"Since Heonwonssi invented the ship and opened a way that people couldn't pass through, their descendents have done business through that path. What a tremendous accomplishment! Long ago, Haussi ruled the waterways by ship for nine years to save five regions. As he turned back to nine provinces, he waited in the ship. Jegal Gongmyeong raised the southeast wind by his great wisdom and let general Joyu make a fire, so they beat the billions of Jo Jo's navy. This was impossible without ships.

"Our twenty four merchant sailors have sailed since we were fifteen years old. Wandering throughout the southwest for several years, today we make an offering. Amyeong, god of the east sea! Chukyung, god of the south sea! Geoseung, god of the west sea! Ugang, god of the north sea! All the gods of rivers and streams! Accept this offering and kindly protect us, O gods! Let Biryem give us a favorable wind, and let Haeyak guide us in the sea. Fulfill our desires for gold and profit. Gosire! Boom, boom."

After the prayer, they told Shim Cheong,

"Get into water!"

Upon hearing that order, Shim Cheong stood up and prayed with her hands clasped in prayer.

"I pray and pray. It's not sorrowful for me to die, and I die in order to work off my father's pain of losing his eyesight. Oh, Heaven! Have mercy on my father so that he can recover his eyesight and see the bright world."

After falling to the floor she turned toward Dohwa village,

"Father, I die! Quickly recover your eyesight!"

She stood and said to the sailors,

"All the sailor merchants! Have a safe trip and get tremendous profit. Then whenever you pass by this area, call on my dead soul and I will keep you from losing your way."

Closing her bright eyes, she covered her face with her skirt and staggered ahead to the prow. She plunged into the water with a splash. These were the waters of the Indangsum and the victim is Shim Cheong, the daughter of Blind Shim, who was like a helpless fallen flower. Was she going to be sacrificed and buried in the bellies of fish?

The chief said with a sigh,

"Alas, what a pity!"

He lamented, and the steersman at his oar laid his face down.

"Maiden Shim, a filial heart from heaven. How precious and pitiful! The loss of parents and siblings could not be more sorrowful than this."

Meanwhile, the wife of Prime Minister Jang in Mureung town had been overwhelmed by sorrow after her parting from Maiden Shim, so every day, she would look at the picture scroll hung on the wall. One day, the scroll's brilliant colors turned to black, and water rolled down from the portrait. The lady said in surprise,

"She must be dead now!"

She wept bitterly. But soon, she saw that the colors of the scroll had mysteriously returned.

"Was she saved by someone? How can I know what is happening on the blue seas, so far away?"

Before midnight on that very same day, the lady prepared sacrificial foods and let servants carry them to the riverside. In a clean place on the sands, she set out offering foods, read a ritual prayer loudly, and performed a sacrificial rite to soothe the soul of Maiden Shim. In the deep night the river village was silent all around.

"Maiden Shim, Maiden Shim! Piteous Maiden Shim! As your lasting grudge was your father's blindness, you sought to recover his eyesight, and through your extreme filial piety, threw away your thread-like life and you became a soul in the stomach of a fish. How pitiful! Why can't the ghosts spare you? You should not have been born or I should not have known you. How cruel that we should be separated by death, after separation in life?

"The moon sets before the last day of the month, and the flowers fall down before the late spring. The moon over an empress tree is like your fair face and the flower wet with dew is like your unaffected mien. A swallow perching on a crossbeam seems to complain of something in your voice. Owing to you, my hair under my ears is turned white and my remaining days are shortened. You can't know my worries since you died, which is hard for me, who is yet alive. Let me soothe you with a glass of drink, the soul like a flower. How sorrowful!"

When the ritual prayer had been said and the incense burned, it seemed as if Heaven took a smile, and the haze lying over the river was filled with flower-shaped clouds. It was as if the sea creatures felt tranquil waves and the beasts felt regretful on a lonely green mountain. Sea gulls sleeping on the sands nearby woke up in surprise, lifting their heads, and ships awakened in surprise stopped proceeding. When the lady dried her tears and picked off sacrificial foods to float in little bits, she saw a goblet rolling as if Maiden Shim had returned, and she went home, her heart filled with boundless sorrow.

The next day she built up a memorial platform high at a huge cost by the riverside, and performed a sacrificial rite on the first and fifth day of every month for three years. Sometimes she would go up and sit lost in thought of the missing Maiden Shim.

Meanwhile, Blind Shim was managing to live his wretched life after losing his only daughter. The people in Dohwa village were so heartbroken of her death that they built a monument beside the platform, where they carved these words.

*With her heart, for her father's blind eyes,
Through her filial heart, she sacrificed her body and died in the water.
The waves were blue and deep through all around
The grass by the river thrives every year, but her sorrow will not disappear.*

The monument stood by the river, and no one could pass by without shedding tears. How unfair and unjust is this world! The poor and powerless people can't even keep alive the body given them by their parents and protect the life given them by

Heaven. Cheong, the God-sent filial daughter, drowned herself in the Indangso sea, after all. The world she returned to is the heavenly world where God's power is limitless. The people, who are blinded by greed, could not save her. Speechless Buddha couldn't help her. Only the water ghosts of Indangsu could no doubt recognize her.

And so it came to pass that the Lord of Heaven made an order to the kings of the four oceans.

"Around a quarter after eleven today, Shim Cheong, with her filial heart from Heaven, will fall into Indangsu. Prepare yourselves in advance! Wait for her, and welcome her honorably. When the time comes, send her back to the human world. If you are not ready in time, there is nothing you can do to escape my punishment, O lords of the four seas."

When they heard this order, the Dragon Kings of the four seas urgently told Sir Turtle, millions of iron armored generals, and innumerable maids to prepare a white jade sedan chair and to wait for the time. Indeed, at the appointed moment, a maiden like white jade fell from above. The fairies rushed to her side and escorted her to the sedan chair, but she refused.

"I am a person of humble birth in the world. How can I dare to sit in the Dragon Kingdom's sedan chair!"

The fairies said,

"It is the will of Heaven. If you are late, the kingdom of the four seas will be in trouble. Do not delay and get in, please."

Shim Cheong could not refuse. As she sat in the sedan chair and the fairies escorted her into Crystal Palace, her dignified mien was grand. The immortal officials and fairies of Heaven stood apart on the right and the left to see Maiden Shim pass by. There were all the famous immortals, a crane, a nan bird, a cloud, and a lion, and all the well-known fairies, including the fairies of Moon Palace, Seowangmo, Mago fairy, Lady of South Mountain, the Eight Fairies and so on and so forth. The beautiful colors of jewels, the sweet scents, and the music were dazzling to the senses.

As Wang Jajin's bamboo oboe, Gwak Cheosa's bamboo drum, Nongok's bamboo flute, Wanjeok's whistle and Geumgo's geomungo joined in one place, the sound of music rocked the sea kingdom. When she went into the Crystal Palace, she found herself fascinated by its beauty. The Crystal Palace, with its thousands of rooms, brilliant with amber pillars, white jade cornerstones, tortoiseshell railings, blinds made of coral beads, and a good omen in the air. The splendid palace shone like three lights of the sky, furnished with five blessings.

The dinner table was set, a meal beyond comparison. On the glass table with the red sandalwood tray, the coral goblet and the amber plate, the purple haze wine and the lotus leaves wine were served with the meat of girin and Jehotang, with a gourd of sweet dew wine and the steamed jujubes on a plate decorated with diamonds. On either side of her, fairies soothed the Maiden Shim who was staying in the Crystal Palace. How could they do otherwise? It was the will of Heaven! The kings of four oceans sent fairies to inquire after her health every morning and evening. They attended on her in shifts. At

every third day, there was a little party and at every fifth, a big party to soothe her troubles.

One day she was told that Lady Okjin would be coming from Heaven. Not knowing who she was, Maiden Shim stood up and watched outside, where the five-colored clouds hung over the blue sky and clamorous music rocked the palace. To the right side, there were China roses, to the left side peach blossoms, peacocks dancing all about, and a blue and white crane guarding a lady. The fairies of Heaven came down in front, while the fairies of water followed behind. Such a solemn sight she had never seen.

Before long, Lady Okjin arrived, got off the sedan chair and came into the room.

"Cheong! It's me, your mother."

Maiden Shim jumped up with surprise at her words.

"My goodness, Mother!"

Running to her, her heart thumping, Shim Cheong hugged her mother's neck, tears of joy streaming down her face.

"I, this humble body, could survive thanks to my father. I've not known your face for fifteen years, though a mother is significant in the life of a daughter. This was my lasting regret, one I was never able to forget. Today, I met you, and that grudge is no more. But whom will my father take delight in?"

Touched by this new delight, Maiden Shim lost her presence of mind. She ushered her mother to a pavilion, where during the party she was held in her arms with her face on her mother's, touching her hands and feet. She behaved like a spoiled child, saying,

"Now I'd like to have a suck at your breast."

She was delighted and cried out like this. The lady was also sad and said patting her daughter on the back,

"Don't cry, my daughter, Cheong! After I gave birth to you I had to leave, due to an urgent order of Heaven. I've felt heartbroken whenever I thought of your blind father's hardships. How should I believe that you, fragile like a mushroom and delicate as the dew, would be snatched from the jaws of death? You must be alive with the help of Heaven! Shall I hug you or carry you on my back?"

"How pretty my daughter is! Your smiling face resembles your father's and your fine hands and feet are mine! It's impossible for you to remember how you were brought up, but you can guess that your father had undergone hardships, since you grew up on begged milk. Has he aged due to his severe hardships? And as for Gwideok's Mama who was very kind, is she still alive?"

"I've heard from my father, so how dare I forget his hardships?" Shim Cheong replied. She told the whole story in detail. Her father's hardships, her begging for food from the age seven and earning a living through sewing, the wife of Prime Minister who invited her to unite as mother and daughter and bestowed tremendous favor on her, the painter who made a picture scroll as she was about to follow sailors, and her debt to Gwideok's Mama. And her mother heard these words and admired her greatly.

In the course of time, when they had been together in the Crystal Palace for several days, Lady Okjin said to Shim Cheong,

"I can't delay any longer, as I have responsibilities in Heaven, even though I take delight in you limitlessly. I have to part from you today, but the day will come when you and your father will rejoice together though now it seems as if you can't imagine that you will meet him again."

Getting to her feet and taking her leave, Shim Cheong was at a loss.

"My goodness, Mother! I thought that I could serve you for a long time. Why should we be separated?"

No matter how earnestly Shim Cheong begged, Lady Okjin could not act as she pleased, so she stood up, held her daughter's hands, and said goodbye. Suddenly, she disappeared into the air. Being unable to do anything, Shim Cheong said goodbye in tears and stayed in Crystal Palace.

Meanwhile, the Lord of Heaven thought highly of Maiden Shim for her Heaven-sent filial piety and didn't want her to stay in the Crystal Palace for a long time. Heaven commanded the Dragon Kings of the four oceans,

"Place Maiden Shim, the filial maiden, into a lotus bud and send her back to Indangsu where she came from."

As ordered, Dragon Kings carefully returned her in a lotus to Indangsu. Maiden Shim said goodbye to Dragon Kings, Eight Fairies and the maids at each palace.

"Maiden Shim with your great filial piety, when you go back to the outer world, may you live in prosperity through all ages."

Shim Cheong replied,

"I, the dead body, have come alive and received Your Majesties' favors and go back to the world again. May your precious bodies in the water palace be peaceful all the time."

As they were exchanging words, she disappeared. No matter how hard they tried, they could find no trace of her.

9

While she sat in the lotus bud, Maiden Shim did not know where she was going. By the time she left the crystal gate, the sky was as bright and clear as a diamond, the sea as still and flat as a mirror. It was spring, when the sweet briars bloomed near the sea and the green willows drooped on the bank of the sea, and an old man sat fishing without a care in the world. When she arrived, it was sunny and vast in every direction. Steadying her mind and looking around herself, Shim Cheong found herself in Indangsu, where she had been led to the palace of the Dragon King. Alas, this might have been another dream!

Just at that moment, the merchants who had sailed to Namgyeong were coming back with a large profit, thanks to consecrating Maiden Shim as a sacrificial victim.

They raised a flag to the top of the mast, danced and chatted with laughter. When they arrived in Indangsu, they prepared to perform a sacrificial rite by butchering a big cow. They prepared a wine jar and all kinds of fruits and beat the drum. Boom, boom, boom!

When the drum had stopped, the sea captain praised the name of Maiden Shim in a loud voice.

"O Heaven-begotten heart of great filial piety, Maiden Shim! Now you have become a ghost in the water. How can I express my sorrow and pity with human words? Thanks to you, we merchants have made a large profit of a hundred million nyangs and return to our country. But, sweet maiden, when shall your flower-like soul return? On our way back, we will drop by in Dohwa village and inquire after your father."

With those words, the captain began to cry, and the other sailors could not stop weeping either.

Just then, to their surprise, they saw a flower floating on the water. All the sailors rushed to the side of the boat, saying,

"Man, what is that flower? Is it a China rose in heaven, or a peach blossom from Yoji? It is not a heavenly flower, not a flower of the world. As it is floating on the water, it must be the soul of Maiden Shim."

As they argued in this manner, white clouds filled the sky, and an immortal official dressed in blue riding on a train arrived, shouting,

"Sailors, floating on the sea! Do not make a fuss at the sight of this flower. It is the precious flower from heaven, so treat it with caution and present it, unharmed, to the Emperor. If not, you shall face a sudden misfortune."

Upon hearing this, the sailors carefully took it out of the water, trembling in fear. They carried it to an empty room and surrounded it with blue curtains, which provided the courtesy necessary between a man and a woman, who keep their distance from one another. When they raised anchor and set sail, a fair wind rose by itself. They soon arrived in Namgyeong in a flash and tied up the ship to the coast.

It was March in the seventeenth year of the sexagenary cycle calendar. At that time, the Emperor of the Song dynasty was grieving for his royal consort, so that not only his people, but also the envoys from the twelve countries that paid tribute to Song, were bewildered and busy. The Emperor's heart was dizzy with grief, and in order to soothe his pain, he had the flowers and plants with which he filled the Sangrim garden planted in the front yard of Hwangkeuk palace.

What rare and beautiful flowers there were! They were full of scarlet lotuses, early plum blossoms, peonies, pear blossoms, cuckoo blossoms, yellow and red chrysanthemums, crape-myrtles, irises, banana plants, pomegranates, citrons, and wild grapes, all kinds of azaleas, cockscombs, touch-me-nots, and the like. When the flowers and plants were in their full bloom and the delighted swallows were dancing along the flowers in their pairs, the Emperor forgot his sorrow for a time, and was pleased to see the flowers, with great joy in his heart.

So when the merchants from Namgyeong presented the rare lotus bud to the Emperor, he was greatly delighted to see it, and placed it on a jade tray all day long.

Though the day went and the night came, in Hwangkeuk palace high in the sky like a cloud, there could be heard only the sound of the drums and gongs of the time watches.

That night, the Emperor had a vision, or perhaps a dream, since he could never be sure if it was just a dream or not. In his vision, an immortal official from Mt. Bongrae came down riding on a crane, bowed down in front of the Emperor, holding his hands up to his eyes, and said, "Heaven knew that the Empress passed away and has sent you a consort, your Majesty. Behold her now."

The Emperor woke up before he could answer and found that it was just a dream. He got up from his bed and took a walk. Then he called upon the court lady, asking her to take him to the lotus bud. But instead of the bud that he had seen, there was a maiden sitting on the jade tray.

The Emperor was delighted.

"Last night, I was promised a beautiful flower in my dreams, and this morning a fairy has come from heaven! I thought that this was just a dream, but the dream became a reality."

The next morning, he had his intentions written and given to the court. When the officials of the court, the civil and military officials (including the three prime ministers and the ministers of the six departments) came before him, the Emperor said,

"Last night, I had an odd dream. Afterwards, I went to see the bud that the merchants presented to me yesterday. Instead of the flower, a maiden was sitting on the jade tray. She had the character of a royal consort. I regard this as a marriage preordained by Providence. What are your thoughts?"

The civil and military officials said together,

"Heaven knew that the late Empress passed away and has sent you a royal consort. Because the national fortune is boundless, this is providential help. There will be no greater event than this in all a country's blessings."

The Emperor was greatly delighted. He had the royal astrologer choose an auspicious day, and also let the Department of Manners prepare for the royal wedding. Wearing the flower coronet of the seven treasures, the embroidery of ten longevity symbols along with the letters of "long life" and "happiness," adorned with pearl and jade trinkets and the ceremonial costume of cranes and bong-hwang, Cheong looked like a fairy in the Moon Palace, and her red skirt with its green blouse shone with rapture as the court ladies and maids in waiting escorted her on all sides.

As she wore the ceremonial coronet with her hair plaited and held with ornamental hairpins of golden bong-hwang and bamboo, with pins of amber, coral, moonstone and tulip here and there, wearing the wedding costume, the new Emperess' bearing was majestic, decorated with these new, first-class articles.

At every story in Gwanghan Palace, the waiting ladies were serving her, setting blue, white and red silk blinds high up in the sky, spreading a mat embroidered with the golden letters, satin curtains bearing the symbols for "long life and happiness," golden screens surrounded with circles bearing charms for many descendants.

There were fine red candles in gold candlesticks and bottles of fine jade, glass, and coral, with pearls of every kind. Nan-bong, peacocks, and the roaring lions and blue

cranes in pairs, and waiting ladies standing in a row like parrots, holding flags. The three prime ministers, the ministers of the six departments, and all the officials of the court stood apart, in the east and west, solemnly and courteously watching as the head protocol official carried the wedding present box.

The Emperor's dignified mien was also worth watching. He had a high-bridged nose and the eyes of a dragon, which is surely the sign of an emperor. The spirits of rivers and mountains were in his long beard and eyebrows, and the wisdom of heaven and earth in his bulging belly. As the proverb says, when the water of the Yellow River was clear again, a saint came into the world.

He wore a crown and an Imperial robe with the sun and moon on his shoulders, symbolizing the three lights in heaven – the Sun, the moon, and the stars – and he was equipped with the five blessings of longevity, wealth, health, love of virtue and a peaceful death in this human world. After the wedding ceremony was over, Maiden Shim, whose dignified mien and manners were glorious and splendid was placed in a sedan chair and accompanied to Hwangkeuk Palace.

From that day forth, Empress Shim's benevolent virtue spread throughout the whole world. The civil and military officials in the government, the lords of several castles, governors in ten towns, and a great number of the people prayed on their knees.

"Long live our Empress, with her royal virtues!"

10

Meanwhile, Blind Shim, who had lost his daughter, lost his mind and sighed away his days. When the spring passed and the summer came, he reproached even the shadows of the nice, leafy trees and the fresh grass. Even the birds singing in nature seemed to sneer at him. The mountains and streams were desolate, and the noise of the water was bleak. Although all the men and women in the neighborhood of Dohwa village came over and exchanged affectionate words to inquire after his health, even though the village girls, his daughter's friends, came to greet him, his heart still grew sadder and sadder. Everywhere he looked he saw her memory, as if his daughter had just come in with toddling steps and sat in front of him and spoke to him. He had lost his heaven-begotten daughter, a child with great filial piety, and he lived like a tree, or a stone. Where can we find a fate like his in all the world? And so he passed his time in tears.

The most important thing in a person's life is filial duty. Although Empress Shim had become an important person, she thought of her father all the time and spent many days sitting by herself in anxiety and lamentation.

"My poor father, is he alive or dead? Has the Buddha of Mongunsa Temple showed its miracle to have his eyes opened, so that he wanders from place to place?"

At this time, the Emperor came to the royal consort's palace and saw her with tears in her eyes and grief on her face. He asked,

"What kind of anxiety do you have, that your face is full of grief? What has happened?"

The Empress kneeled and said, humbly,

"I am not a fairy from the Dragon Palace by birth, but Shim Hakgyu's daughter from Dohwa village in Hwangju. My father was blind, a fact that caused him bitterness deep in his heart. They said that if he made an offering of three hundred bags of rice to the Buddha of Mongunsa temple, he could open his eyes. However, my family's financial situation was bad, and I could not afford this price. I was compelled to sell myself as a sacrificial offering to the sailor merchants of Namgyeong, and to throw myself into Indangsu. Because Heaven spared me, and through the kindness of the Dragon Kings, I came back to the human world, and have been elevated to great heights. But the blind man is the poorest among all the disabled in the world.

"Your Majesty, tell the whole world to summon the blind, and give a royal banquet. Then, maybe I can do my filial duty, and you can celebrate the peaceful reign of our country."

The Emperor was moved by this, and praised her, saying,

"You are truly a woman of great filial piety."

At once, he summoned all the officials, told them the reasons for his actions, and proclaimed a royal order.

"On the last day of this month, I will give a banquet for the blind at Hwangseong."

In every province and town, the order was posted on every street and reported widely. In this way, they helped the blind to come up to the capital.

Every blind person was sent to Hwangseong. Even those who were sick were given medicine and sent to the banquet after they had recovered their health. Rich and important blind men who tried to excuse themselves from the summons were taken to the barrack gate and spanked in front of all the people for refusing an Imperial order, then sent to the capital anyway. All the blind, young and old, went to Hwangseong at once.

But where was Blind Shim, who had not heard of this celebration? The Buddha of Mongunsa Temple was not miraculous enough, for he had lost both his daughter and the rice, but still did not gain his eyesight. As time passed by, his life became worse and worse and his suffering became heavier and heavier. At first, the people of Dohwa did what they could to help him, in honor of the memories of Mrs. Gwak and the cordial devotion of Shim Cheong. They took charge of the gifts the merchants had left him and invested it, earning him interest upon interest. So his worth increased steadily, and he was never in any particular shortage of clothing and food.

At that time, there was a woman called Ppaengdeok's Mama, whose conduct was odd and wicked. She knew about his family's rich financial condition, and married him. Blind Shim enjoyed their life together, but her behavior was unspeakably the worst possible. She let him ruin his finances and fall into the hardest times ever. She spent his rice on sweets, exchanged unhusked rice for meat, sold all kinds of grains to drink wine at the bar, and gave the cooked rice to her neighbor. She asked for tobacco from whomever she saw while carrying an empty pipe in her hand, annoyed her neighbors,

fought with her friends, took naps in the summer house when she was drunk, cried in the middle of the night with a long neck, and seduced the men of the neighborhood. She could not stand a single moment without using her mouth three hundred sixty days a year, so she ate up the household completely, as if it were a red ripe persimmon or a soft persimmon.

As Blind Shim had been a widower for many years, there was harmony between the married couple, even if she treated her marriage like an unwanted job, like she was working for a district office to receive wages. Because she intended to run away after squandering his wealth, she wasted the property of poor Blind Shim day and night, like a crow in June who digs up a spoiled watermelon.

One day, Blind Shim called Ppaengdeok's Mama.

"Dear wife, Ppaengdeok's Mama! Our financial situation was rich, but we are now in needy circumstances. Chances are that we will have to beg for food. If so, rather than be shameful and looked down on here, let us beg away from home. What do you think about moving out?"

She replied,

"I will obey as you decide."

"It is natural to say so. Do you have any debts to the neighbors or to other people?"

"A little."

"How much?"

"About forty nyangs for wine at the tavern in the back of the neighboring village.

"You ate well," Blind Shim said, puzzled, "Anything else?"

"Fifty nyangs for tobacco when I went to Anchon town."

"Ha ha! You ate well indeed."

"Twenty nyangs to an oil merchant."

"For what?"

"For hair oil."

Blind Shim was shocked.

"Surely, it can't be that much!"

"Surely, it is pretty petty money. It can't be that much."

As they spoke like this, whenever Blind Shim thought of that wealth, he missed his daughter so much it seemed as though his bones melted away. As if he were mad or drunk, he ran outside alone, visited the road on which his daughter had walked, sat on the riverside alone, called out his daughter's name, and said, crying,

"My daughter, Cheong, why can't you come here? If you are dead in the deep water of Indangsu, go to heaven and see your mother. Please, you two spirits of mother and daughter, do take me quickly!"

While he was lost in his grief, an officer who came out of the district office rushed to him, having heard that Blind Shim was crying by the riverside.

"Hello, blind man! The governor in the district office is calling you. Let's go quickly."

When he heard the words, 'the district office,' Blind Shim was startled.

"I have done nothing wrong!"

"In Hwangseong, the blind are going to receive official rank and lots of good houses. Let us go to the district office quickly."

Blind Shim followed the officer and came to the district office. The magistrate said,

"In Hwangseong, there will be a banquet for the blind. You must go there quickly."

Blind Shim replied,

"As I have no clothes and expenses for such travel, I cannot go to Hwangseong, one thousand lis away."

Because they knew about Blind Shim's financial condition at the district office, they gave him traveling expenses and a suit of clothes and told him to start quickly. Blind Shim was compelled to come back to his house and look for his wife.

"Ppaengdok's Mama!" he shouted.

Meanwhile, Ppaengdok's Mama had been lost in joy, since she had thought that Blind Shim had drowned himself and the household was left to her. Now that Blind Shim had returned, she replied, with consternation,

"Yes? Yes!?"

"Honey! When I went to the district office today, they said that in Hwangseong, there will be a banquet for the blind. I was told to go there. I will be back soon, so manage household affairs well and wait for me until I come back."

"A wife should be submissive to her husband," she replied.

"How can I stay when you go? I will go with you."

"Thank you for your words. Shall we start together? I have entrusted Kim Jangja, who lives in the opposite village, with three hundred nyangs. Let us take back fifty nyangs from what he owes us."

"My goodness, dear blind sir. You are talking nonsense! I already got that money back, and spent it all for apricots this month."

Blind Shim stared at her at a loss.

"Just a few days have passed since I got back those three hundred nyangs. Did you spend it all for apricots?"

"Just because I spent some money, of only three hundred nyangs, are you angry with me?"

"Judging from your manner of speaking, you probably spent all the money which I have entrusted to Gwideok's family."

"Right! I got one hundred nyangs back. I already spent all of it for some rice cake and red bean porridge."

Blind Shim was at a loss and raised his voice.

"My goodness! Wicked woman! When my daughter, the heaven-begotten Cheong, started on her last journey towards Indangsu, that was the money that she wanted me to depend on after her death! Who are you to waste that precious money for some apricots, rice cakes, and red bean porridge?"

"Then what can I do? How can I eat when I want to eat?" She leaned towards him and said again,

"I do now know why, but I skipped my period last month, and sour things appeal to my appetite, while I don't feel like eating rice at all."

Blind Shim was a stupid man, for when he heard this, he was delighted and said,

"Honey, it must be the sighs of pregnancy. But if you eat sour things so much and give birth, the child will be too sour to be useful! Ha ha ha! Either a son or a daughter, you may give birth to just one. Anyway, let's go together to the Hwangseong banquet, just as we would do some sightseeing in the capital."

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After saying this, he prepared himself for the journey. His manner of being dressed up also was worth watching. He wore the brim of a gat from Jeju island, bound his thick hemp coat with a cloth belt, and carried his travel money wrapped in a cloth on his shoulders. Holding a bamboo cane in his left hand, he let himself be led by Ppaengdok's Mama and left for Hwangseong.

Along their travels, they spent the night at an inn. Near the inn, a blind man named Blind Hwang had wanted to meet Ppaengdok's Mama, because she had the reputation of a filthy woman in neighboring towns. Knowing that she was sure to come over to the inn, he had a talk with his owner over it and tried to seduce her.

Ppaengdok's Mama thought to herself,

"Even if I go to the Hwangseong banquet with Blind Shim, I can't join it with my open eyes. Even if I come back home, I will be under the pressure of my debt, and I will not be able to make a living at home. But if I follow Blind Hwang, my body will be comfortable and I will have apricots for myself for one season. I will follow blind Hwang."

Stealing even blind Shim's traveling gear and expenses, she ran away into the night.

Poor Blind Shim woke up the next morning without noticing her absence and said,

"Honey, Ppaengdok's Mama, let's go quickly. Why do you sleep so late?"

Even though he urged her to wake up, there was no answer because she was already many li away.

"Hey, Honey?"

No matter how much he called her, there was no answer. Blind Shim felt there was something wrong and groped around the bedside, only to find that the money belt was gone. He didn't realize until then that she had run away.

"My goodness! The damn wife really did run away!"

Blind Shim fainted in his mind and sighed.

"Hey, Ppaengdok's Mama, where did you go and leave me alone? Honey, let's go together. Where did you go and leave me alone? With whom will I travel, and whom will I trust during my thousand li journey to Hwangseong? Ppaengdok's Mama, where did you go and leave me alone? Woe is me! What is my life like?"

He sighed for a time, then thought better of it, saying,

"From now on, if I trust her again, I'll be dissolute. Since I saw the death of wise Mrs. Gwak, and I was separated from the heaven-begotten filial piety of my daughter Cheong, if I think of that damn woman again, I'll be a dissolute as well. I'll not think of her any more."

Despite his regret, he had grown fond of her and didn't forget that dissolute woman.

"Oh, Ppaengdok's Mama!"

Crying out her name, he left the inn.

While he managed to move on alone, it was very hot during the months of May and June. It was a very hot day, burning like fire. Arriving at some place, soaked in sweat, he heard children bathing in a clean stream. They shouted to each other and splashed the water. Blind Shim said,

"All right, then. I would rather take a bath."

Taking off his summer shorts and unlined summer jacket, he bathed for a time and cooled off. But while he was bathing, a thief even poorer than Blind Shim stole his clothing and ran away. Blind Shim was at a loss.

"You damn thief! Why would you steal clothes from a blind man, of all things! Among the disabled in the world, is there anyone like me? Although the sun and the moon are bright, I cannot tell which is east and west. Is there any reason for me to live more? When I kill myself right now and go to Heaven, I'll touch the lovely face of my daughter, Cheong."

Naked Blind Shim was soaked with sweat under the burning sun and sighed, sitting by himself alone. Who on earth would give him clothes? At that moment, the governor of Mureung came back from Hwangseong with a loud clamor of heralds and trumpets. Hearing this gladly, Blind Shim slapped his knee.

"All right, I'll demand my own way to that official."

Covering himself with his hands, he shouted,

"Tell him! Tell him! Government servant! Tell him that I, a blind man on the way of Hwangseong, plead my wretchedness."

The marching dignitaries stopped before Blind Shim.

"Where is the blind man going? Why did you take off your clothes, and what do you want to say?"

Blind Shim replied,

"Yes, sir. I, a blind man, tell you. I live in Dohwa village in Hwangju. I was going to Hwangseong for the banquet, but it was hot so I bathed in this stream. While I was in the water, my clothing and travel expenses were stolen. Please, search for them."

Hearing this with surprise, the governor asked,

"Then, what have you lost?"

Blind Shim told him, one by one, and the Governor replied,

"Your condition is regrettable. But it is hard to search for them right now. Instead, I will give you some clothing. Put it on quickly and go up to Hwangseong."

The governor called one of his servants and ordered,

"As it does not matter if you wear a beongkeoji, take off your gat and give it to the blind. Palanquin bearer, wear a towel instead, and give your mangkeon to this blind man."

What Blind Shim was given was better than what he lost. He bowed a hundred times in gratitude, and started again for Hwangseong. On his way, he lamented his fate.

"How can I go? How can I go? How can I go by myself? Where am I going to spend the night, and where am I going to spend tomorrow? If I rode the horse with the bluish mane and tail that Jo Jaryong rode when crossing over the river, I would go to Hwangseong some time today. How many days will it take for me to go to Hwangseong on my feeble legs? How can I go? How can I go? How can I go by myself?! How can I go, I who have blind eyes and a weak body, on the thousand li's journey to Hwangseong? How can I go? How can I go? Though I go up to Hwangseong, what place is it? How can I meet my daughter at the place that is not Dragon Palace. How can I meet Mrs. Gwak at the place that is not that underworld? How can this sick body, destitute and lost, go even there?"

Sighing like this, he went across rivers and went over mountains where the landscapes with their thick green leaves were beautiful. Before he knew it, he had already arrived near Hwangseong. When he crossed the Naksu bridge, a woman came out and asked,

"Is there anyone here named Blind Shim? Please come see me!"

He tilted his head on one side with curiosity, and thought,

"It is strange, there is nobody who knows me here."

At once he replied, and she led him to a magnificent house. She set the table for dinner, a rich and sumptuous repast. After dinner, the woman said,

"Dear Blind man, let's go into that room."

"Madam, do you have any trouble? I am blind, but I cannot tell your fortune, or chant a sutra."

The woman replied,

"Stop talking and follow me to my room."

Blind Shim thought,

"My goodness! After all this, I might be taken away as a bridegroom!"

When he entered the room, the anonymous woman asked politely,

"Are you Blind Shim?"

"Yes. How do you know me?"

"There is a way to know you. My family name is Ahn. Before I was ten, I became blind. As I learned how to read a fortune for several years, I didn't marry and became almost twenty years old. Last night, I had a dream. I saw the sun and the moon in the sky fall. Thinking it over and over, I saw that the sun and the moon were human eyes. So I knew that my spouse would be a blind man like me. Because the sun and

moon fell in the water, I knew that his name would be Shim. Therefore, I have had you come here like this. Maybe this was an act of Providence."

Blind Shim was satisfied in his heart.

"Though your words sound good, how dare I desire to be like that?"

That night, Blind Shim slept together with the blind woman Ahn and enjoyed himself. But he had a wild dream. The next day, he sat and worried about it greatly. Blind Ahn asked,

"While we want to live together for a hundred years, what kind of anxieties do you have that worry you so?"

"I had a dream last night," Blind Shim replied.

"My skin was pared off and made into a drum. When the drum was beaten, all the leaves fell and covered all the roots, and flames soared high up into the sky and a swarm of bees flew in. I am sure that it is a dream of my death."

Blind Ahn thought for a while, then said,

"It is a great dream. Now that your skin was made into a drum, the sound of a drum, 'kungseong,' is a homophone for 'kungseong,' the royal castle. That all the leaves fell and covered the roots means that the children will meet their own roots, their parents, which means there will be a reunion of parent and child. The flames soaring high and the bees came and went, flapping their wings with a buzzing noise, means there will be a good thing, and you will also dance with joy."

Blind Shim lamented only in blank dismay,

"The heaven-born, filially pious beauty, my daughter, Shim Cheong, was drowned at Indangsu. How can I meet her again?"

After his lamentation, he stayed there several days because Blind Ahn held him back. Afterwards, he said goodbye without pledging to meet again and left for Hwangseong.

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When Blind Shim arrived at Hwangseong, the blind men who came from every province and town crowded every inn. There came so many blind men that even those who were not blind seemed like they were blind.

The soldiers, according to their orders, shouted all around the streets carrying blue flags on their shoulder.

"Dear blind men from every province and town! The banquet for the blind is almost over. So go and attend it quickly."

They passed through the town giving notice with loud voices. Blind Shim, who was taking a rest at an inn, left it quickly and visited the royal palace. The chief of the gatekeepers attended his office and counted the number of the blind who came, day by day.

At this time, though Empress Shim had received the addresses and names of the blind men who came, one after another, she did not see her father's name on the list. She

lamented with tears, but since there were three thousand court maids waiting on her, she could not cry loudly. Leaning over the balustrade and turning her face against the side posts of the gate door, she said to herself,

"My poor father, is he alive or dead in this world? Can it be that, because his eyes were opened by Buddha's miracle, he did not attend this banquet? Or is it because he is too infirm to travel all this way, because he is seventy years old? Did he face some dangerous situation on his long journey to the palace? I am upset and grieved, because he does not know that I am alive and have become a noblewoman."

While she lamented in this manner, all the blind men entered the palace and sat in their appointed seats. Seeing a blind man who sat in the last seat, she saw that for all his white hair and the black dirt under his ears, he must be her father.

The Empress called her maid and ordered,

"Bring me the old blind man over there, and let him tell his address and name."

Blind Shim stood up and followed the maid. When he came near the front of the Emperor's throne, he told his grievous story in detail.

"This humble blind man is Shim Hakgyu from Dohwa village in Hwangju. In my twenties, I lost my sight, and in my forties, I lost my beloved wife. I brought up my daughter with great difficulty, begging milk from neighbor women, until she was fifteen years old. Cheong, my daughter, was very dutiful to me."

"While we lived on the food we begged from others and made a narrow living together, I was told that if I offered three hundred bags of rice to the Buddha of Mongunsa Temple with a sincere heart, I would open my eyes and see once more. My daughter sold herself to the merchants of Namgyeong, for the sum of three hundred bags of rice and drowned at Indangsu. Although my daughter was dead, I could not open my eyes. I, the one who had the bad fate, should have died earlier, but I want to tell my reasons for doing so in front of your Majesty. And so I came here, despite the journey of one thousand lis."

When he had finished, he shed tears of blood for the hardships he had suffered in his old age.

"Oh, my daughter, Cheong!" he wailed. Blind Shim fell on his face and did not stop crying.

Upon hearing this, Empress Shim felt as if her eyes had become bloodshot and her bones melted away. She helped her father to stand on his feet.

"Dear father, I am Shim Cheong, the very one that was drowned in InDangSu water. Oh, my poor father! Open your eyes now and look at me, please!"

Blind Shim, in his surprise, shouted,

"What are you talking about?" He rubbed his eyes with his hands roughly. Suddenly he noticed a bright light as both of his eyes opened with a loud sound.

"Ha ha ha! What has happened to me? Is my heaven-begotten daughter of great filial piety, Cheong, alive? You say my daughter Cheong is alive? If you are my daughter, let me see you!"

At that moment, white clouds were thickening, and blue and white cranes, nan-bongs and peacocks, came and went. Even the fog was denser and denser over Blind

Shim's head, and his two eyes were opened widely, and the whole world became bright. Blind Shim was glad in his heart, and he shouted loudly,

"My goodness! Both my eyes happened to see the light again and see the whole world! Since my closed eyes were opened suddenly, I am glad to see heaven and earth, to see the sun and moon!"

Looking up into his daughter's face, since it was in raptures, over her coronet decorated with several accessories, clear and beautiful, Blind Shim realized that he had opened his eyes, and looked around, glad to see the many colors. He was so delighted that he rushed to her.

"Who is this? It is the face that I saw in the dream of the eighth of April in the first year. The same voice, but an unknown face, Ha ha! People of the world, the old sayings that 'Sorrow comes after joy,' and 'Pleasure follows pain,' have come true! Huzzah, hurrah, huzzah, hurrah! I am glad, as if a lamp was lighted in a dim empty room, and I saw Jo Jaryong at the great battle of the Sanyang river!

"When I opened my two blind eyes, where do I find myself but the royal palace in Hwangseong? When I looked around the royal court, my daughter Cheong is the Empress. What a surprise! I thought that she was drowned at Indangsu, the far away blue sea a long way away, but she has become a royal consort in this world. I opened my eyes suddenly, my eyes which could not see for about forty years. All these things, we cannot find in the ancient writings! People of the world, have you ever heard of things like this? Huzzah and hurrah! What event could be as happy as this? I have never been so happy, not once in my seventy years of life!"

With the news of the opening of Blind Shim's eyes, all the blind people of the country started seeing again. Old ones and young ones, male blind and female blind, those with one eye blind and both eyes blind, the born blind and the unborn blind, all who could not see clearly were now able to see. It is as if the sky and the earth had opened and awakened overnight

Empress Shim was also glad, and she led her father in by the hand, escorted by her three thousand court maids. The Emperor was also glad, and Shim Hakgyu, who was blind no more, was appointed Buwonkun and given houses, rice paddies, and dry fields, including male and female slaves to work the land.

Ppaengdeok's Mama and Blind Hwang were arrested, brought in, and punished for their sin severely. The people of Dohwa village were released from their taxes and labors. The women who gave their milk to Empress Shim when she was a baby were generously rewarded with new houses and money. Her friends who grew up with her were called to the royal court at the invitation of the Empress.

When the wife of the late Prime Minister Jang came to the court, she and Empress Shim held each other and wept, a scene so moving that heaven and earth were moved to tears. She brought out the hanging scroll and spread it before Empress Shim, the scroll with the Empress' portrait and the poem in the Empress' own handwriting. Holding the picture together in their hands, they were both glad and sad in their heart, while the face on the scroll also seemed to weep.

After Buwonkun Shim visited his family grave mountain and the tomb of his wife, Mrs. Gwak, he married Blind Ahn, who gave birth to a son, at his age of seventy years. Empress Shim's generous royal virtues were known throughout the whole world, and all the people prayed for the longevity of their Emperor and Empress. And because the people followed the example of Empress Shim, filial sons and daughters and virtuous wives appeared throughout the land.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of the Story of Shim Cheong¹

Introduction and Background of the Story

As I have shown in Chapter 1, storytelling is one of the most important forms of teaching, and folktales offer unique opportunities for teaching moral and life lessons that are not expressible through other means. However, a danger exists that such stories can be manipulated and changed from their original forms to express or emphasize ideologies or lessons that were peripheral to the story in its original form. In many cases, the stories may be used to perpetuate unjust situations that condone violence and abuse by those in power. In Chapter 3 I have also shown how theologies of the cross can be used in a similar manner by portraying Jesus' death as an act of willing self-sacrifice to the will of a God who approved of the suffering of innocents.

A similar situation exists with the Korean folktale "The Story of Shim Cheong," which has been used as a means of reinforcing an ideal of self-giving filial piety giving false emphasis to the story as one in which Cheong makes a self-giving decision with bravery as a great filial daughter. In many cases, the parallels between the story of Shim Cheong and the tale of Jesus' own death and resurrection may result in an unconscious conflation of Christian theology with the ideals of filial piety of self-giving. Through the course of my library research in both the U.S. and Korea, however, I found that the study

¹ The English spellings of her name are introduced in various forms. For the sake of consistency I will use one form, "Shim Cheong" while citing different spellings in the footnotes if necessary.

of the Story of Shim Cheong is limited in the area of Korean literature. Some scholars of literature, utilizing a feminist perspective, point out the gender-specific roles the characters in the story play in relation to being an object of sacrifice (using the term “scapegoat.”) A very limited number of articles are written about the Story of Shim Cheong in relation to Christian theology in general.

As you read the story of Shim Cheong in its full version in Chapter 4, you may have noted many parallel images and themes to the biblical images and Christian teachings. Indeed, there are remarkable similarities between the birth, life, drowning, and rebirth of Cheong and the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are very important parallels. And many Christians embrace the messages of the story of Shim Cheong as the ultimate message of sacrifice since they have been taught to imitate the suffering of Jesus to be “mature Christians”. In Chapter 3, I have elaborated how dangerous it is to interpret the death of Jesus as a plan ordained by God, especially for those who have been raised in an oppressive culture.

This chapter suggests how we can retell the story of Shim Cheong in ways that offer healthier world views to those victimized by power, first by breaking many associations between Christianity and self-sacrifice that may already be unconsciously held by many Korean women Christians, then peeling off the layer of bravery masked by filial piety of Cheong. It also includes re-framing the story of Shim Cheong on another level as it is compared to the biblical images.

Therefore, I have divided the analysis of the story into two sections. The first section, under the subtitle of “Shim Cheong, a Victim of a Cruel Society,” addresses those

victimized by unjust social expectations. It focuses on the dangerous message of filial piety which insists on self-giving from children, on corrupt religious institutions and their effect on the poor and powerless of society, and on how the helpless victims of society handle the situation for their own survival. A closer examination of the story of Shim Cheong in its original form will demonstrate that, far from gladly accepting violence and abuse, the tale includes the agonies and heart wrenching pain that characters in the story experience living and being forced to die in a society sustained by unjust systems. The elements of this first section provides the focus of the present project presented in Chapter 6, which limits its audience to those who are wounded by false messages of the virtue of self-giving.

The second section, under the subtitle of “Shim Cheong and Jesus Christ,” points out the parallel images of the story of Shim Cheong and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This section is included with a warning sign that not everyone is ready to imitate either Shim Cheong or Jesus Christ in their living out of their heavenly call and self-giving, sacrificial love. Such readiness takes complete healing from one’s own wounds, recognition of the prevalent abusive system we live in, appropriation of individual and collective shadows, and spiritual maturation. In spite of dangers and cautions, however, this section could not be eliminated from the analysis of the story without undercutting the value of the story.

Background

The story of Shim Cheong is an ancient Korean folktale. Like many folktales and narratives (which originated from oral tradition and have been altered into many different

versions), the story of Shim Cheong has been found in many forms in different regions of Korea. The story has been known by many different titles, including “The Story of Queen Shim” or “The Filial Daughter Shim Cheong”. EoonShik Choi refers to Kim TaeJoon’s work in History of Literature in ChoSun,² and counts seven different versions of the story with the same theme and elements.³ Over 80 manuscripts of this story have been found,⁴ with the earliest recorded version dating back to 1845⁵ in the form of Pansori, an ancient form of Korean opera comprised of solos and narrations. Generally the story is titled in two different ways: “Shim Cheong Jun” when it is categorized as literature and “Shim Cheong Ga” when recorded in Pansori.

No matter which version of the story is considered, most people understand and remember that the main theme of this tale is filial piety. Scholars debate whether the filial piety expressed in the story of Shim Cheong has its roots in social doctrine of Confucianism or originates from the teachings of Buddhism. I found that elements of both teachings exist in the story: Cheong’s willingness to be sacrificed in the sea to bring sight for her blind father is clearly in line with the teachings of Confucianism, while her rebirth through death in the water definitely speaks of Buddhist influences. The filial

² This literature is a study of ancient Korean literature published in 1939, which was the first attempt to study “The Story of Shim Cheong” as a literary form.

³ EoonShik Choi, Shim Cheong Jun (The Story of Shim Cheong) (Seoul: Shi-In-Sa, 1984), 171.

⁴ SukKyu Jang, Shim Cheong Jun GuJo wa Eui Mi (The Structure and Theme of The Story of Shim Cheong) (Seoul: Bak-Ee-Jung, 1998), 314.

⁵ Ibid., 15. I would like to point out the fact that the year 1845 is about 50 years before the Western missionaries brought Christianity to Korea. It is interesting, though, to note that there are many themes and images that show elements similar to Christianity.

piety expressed in the story of Shim Cheong cannot be limited to any specific philosophical or religious teaching. In fact, the story expresses the major themes of all three dominant religious influences of ancient Korea: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.⁶ Despite this fact, it is interesting to note that the story contains hidden criticisms of the major organized religions of the time. C. S. Song, in his book, Tell Us Our Names: Story Theology from Asian Perspective, echoes the power of folktales and their power of truth telling:

There is something deep in folk tales and fairy stories – culturally and spiritually deep. Portrayed in them are children, women, and men puzzled by the mystery of the universe, bewildered by riddles of life, victimized by injustices in the world, and hard pressed by evil socio-political forces. These are stories of despair and hope, tales of doubt and faith, and account of the search for the moral power that will enable persons to live in the world. . . They are, in a true sense, parables of human lives. In them we find popular theology at its most unsophisticated and yet at its most profound, at its simplest and yet at its deepest, at its most unadorned and yet at its most moving.⁷

If one reads between the lines, one finds that the story of Shim Cheong is a sarcastic commentary on the doctrines of institutionalized religions and the religious authorities of such organizations. I will elaborate on this in a later section.

Shim Cheong, A Victim of Cruel Society

A Birth of a Girl in the Patriarchal Society

When Blind Shim and his wife, Mrs. Gwak⁸, are in their mid forties, they agree that they would like to have a child. The reason Blind Shim gives is that when they both die,

⁶ Ibid., 185-86.

⁷ C. S. Song, Tell Us Our Names, ix.

⁸ In Korean tradition, women keep their maiden names even after marriage. Children take their father's last name as in western tradition.

there will be no one to continue the annual ceremonies of ancestor veneration (See Chapter 4, pp. 93-94). Giving proper rituals for the dead is a very important part of life for Koreans. It doesn't matter how lowly a life one led while living. If one receives the proper rites of burial upon death, the life is worthy. So the couple agrees that they should do their best to have a child, and Mrs. Gwak devotes herself in prayer. Her devotion is not wasted, and she is found to be expecting soon after. The narrator adds that the gift of conception is Heaven's grace, and acknowledges that the true heart of Mrs. Gwak has moved Heaven (See Chapter 4, p. 94).

This theology assumes that there is grace in heaven, and that human actions can contribute to the receiving of heavenly grace. Sincerity, devotion, sacrifice of material goods, and pure yearning move the heart of Heaven enough to give the gift of a human heart's true desire. In many Asian cultures, "Heaven" is used to refer to a divine, universal entity that governs the world, rather than the place where souls go after physical death. It can therefore be seen as equivalent to a Western concept of God.

After the birth of Cheong, Blind Shim sets up a table of thanksgiving with freshly cooked rice and soup to Samsin, the goddess of birth who oversees conception, gestation, birth, and lactation, and sends a wholehearted prayer to all the gods he can name (See p. 95). Many wishes for the newborn child are expressed in this prayer of pampering the deities, thanksgiving, and blessings.

There is an initial disappointment when Mrs. Gwak finds out she has just given birth to a girl rather than a boy. But Blind Shim quickly reassures her by saying, "Even though a daughter is less satisfactory, a bad son might bring shame on our ancestors. A good

daughter will never make us envy a bad son” (See p. 95). The couple’s confidence is restored when they realize that although a girl cannot carry the family name, she can marry a good man and produce many grandchildren, which will be a delight to them. This conversation between the couple reveals the status of women set by traditional Korean society influenced by Confucianism. The initial disappointment of Mrs. Gwak shows real concern for not having a son after all. In their dialogue, however, it is revealed that in spite of the social expectations, reality speaks louder. Even though men are given more status than women, individual quality determines real usefulness of a person. Even in a lower status, a daughter can give many benefits-- and often more than a son-- to the parents if she has fine qualities and productive skills.

Incompetent Father and Absent Mother

In the beginning of the story, Blind Shim is introduced as person of a respectable noble family (See p. 93). As a blind man, he can’t earn a living, but still behaves as a member of a noble family, which also includes not doing work that was considered less than noble in those days. The story does not indicate any incident where Blind Shim shows even a slight interest in making their poor situation better. It is his wife who does all the hard work, not only to meet their daily economic needs, but also to save enough to make sacrificial offerings when Blind Shim expresses his desire to gain an offspring. This does not change after his wife’s death. Cheong starts begging at an early age, then works doing odd jobs and household chores for the families in the village so that she and her father can continue to have three meals a day. Lest we be too quick to judge Blind

Shim, however, we should consider that this was a common social problem of the time, as DongHyun Choi relates:

The 19th century produced many incompetent men who depended upon women for daily survival, which caused women not only to take care of household chores but also work outside home to support the family. Many men lived as parasites, and Blind Shim was such a man.⁹

Choi indicates the Confucianist patriarchal system as the reason to blame for the large number of incompetent men during the Yi Dynasty (Chosun). According to Confucianist teaching, no scholars and aristocrats should do any manual labor. Confucius lists three prohibitions that a man of noble origin should remember: "An aristocrat should endure hunger or cold without uttering a word of poverty. The hand of an aristocrat should never touch money. And never ask the price of rice."¹⁰ He should devote all his energy to reading and studying so that he may obtain a position in the government. Since Shim HakGyu is blind, he has lost the capability to read or study. He is no longer eligible to hold any position in the government. He is helpless and hopeless.

Cheong's name is given to her by her mother, which is an unusual practice, especially since Blind Shim is of a noble family. One would think that a scholarly task like choosing an appropriate name for a child would be the rightful task of a scholar. Mrs. Gwak is known as a devoted wife who knows what is proper and what her role is in the family. Korean tradition holds that a good wife should defer to her husband. Thus, we can determine that she would not have tried to dominate the situation if it were not

⁹ DongHyun Choi, "Reference to the Theme of Shim Cheong Jun: A Feminist Perspective," in Shim Cheong Jun YonGu (Study of the Story of Shim Cheong Jun), ed. DongHyun Choi and YoungDae Yoo (Seoul: TaeHakSa, 1999), 405.

¹⁰ Ibid., 404. Translation mine.

necessary. This serves as further evidence that the role reversal that happened when Mr. Shim was in his twenties with the collapse of family finance and the loss of his eyesight has spread to other areas of Blind Shim's life and has taken away his other capabilities.

Rather than helping Cheong with the tasks of their daily living, Blind Shim creates more troubles for her. After being saved from drowning by the chief monk of Mongunsa Temple, Blind Shim is told how he can open his eyes. Without considering the realities of his circumstances, he tells the monk to write down his name on the list along with three hundred bags of rice. After looking around the poor hut the monk comments that he doesn't think Blind Shim can afford to pay such an offering. To that Blind Shim replies angrily and threatens the monk. Blind Shim's pride and boastfulness blinds him to the consequences of his own actions. He acts impulsively and causes his daughter to sell herself for 300 bags of rice. When he realizes what he has done, he regrets his actions but is still helpless, doing nothing to change the situation. He only sighs, blaming his fate and helplessly accepting the situation (See p. 107). It is a moment of self-realization and recognition of his futility; his mind is undependable, and his body is not even worth selling. We can see that Cheong grows up with an incompetent father whose survival on earth and well-being is her responsibility, and whose mess Cheong has to clean up. Perhaps this situation could have been alleviated if her mother were still present. However, we read that Mrs. Gwak became ill after giving birth to Cheong because she has to go out to be hired as a daily laborer since she could not afford the luxury of rest (See p. 96). She dies shortly thereafter, and Cheong grows up without a

mother. It is as if she is an abandoned child (or worse), since now she has to care for her blind father.

Since her mother dies just seven days after her birth, Blind Shim, holding a cane in one hand, holding the baby in another, takes Cheong around the village to beg for milk. He looks for any nursing mother. What is left for Blind Shim is the ability to draw out sympathy from others and the skill to beg (See pp. 100-101). This unfortunate circumstance, when looked at from a different angle, suggests that the significance of Cheong's life is not limited to just one mother or family. Being fed by all the nursing women of the village, Cheong develops intimate relationships with each one of them. Her survival depends upon the mercy of perfect strangers, and her pitiful situation touches the heart of women, even those whose hearts are made of stone or wood, or those with a wicked disposition.

Social Constraints

DongHyun Choi points out that most versions of "The Tale of Shim Cheong" that have been handed down to us were recorded in the 18th and 19th centuries. In order to fully understand this story, one must understand the social background of the time. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Yi Dynasty had reached the pinnacle of its patriarchal society and the nadir of its economy:

The influence of the patriarchal system of Confucianism had reached Korea even from ancient times, but its practices in wedding arrangements, inheritance, and dividing consanguinity had been equally allotted in the maternal lines and in the lines of female spouse as well as the paternal lines. However during the latter part of Cho Sun (Yi Dynasty) the paternal lines were strengthened, and a strong patriarchal society was created.¹¹

¹¹ DongHyun Choi, 401. Translation mine.

Since then, the value of women has been measured by their usefulness in sustaining the current patriarchal system. In the midst of an economic crisis due to many foreign invasions and the danger of the crushing caste system, there was a heightened sense of urgency to uphold the patriarchal system, as the political leaders assumed that this was the best solution for national stability.

The story of Shim Cheong, Choi claims, has attended to the need to endorse the patriarchal ideology. For example, Mrs. Gwak is praised as a wise woman and a good wife as long as she is able to work extra jobs to make a living and satisfy the needs of her husband. Shim Cheong is praised as a filial daughter when she begs to earn food for her father and herself, and praised even more when she sells herself to pay for the offering to Buddha, a promise her father made out of impulse. Choi asserts, "Women became the greatest victims of the collapsed family."¹²

The question now becomes: was this the original intention of the story? Is there no message from the story of Shim Cheong, other than that children and wives should sacrifice themselves for the sakes of their fathers and husbands? Or did the story of Shim Cheong have a deeper, more humanist meaning that was perverted by the interpretation of the patriarchal society as it insisted on maintaining the status quo? Is this tale an endorsement of patriarchal Yin Dynasty society, or should it be viewed as a response to the abuses and injustice of that time period?

Cheong as a Victim

¹² Ibid., 404. Translation mine.

The life of Shim Cheong is that of a victim of an unjust society. First, Shim Cheong is deprived of her childhood in the name of the survival of her family and the comfort of her father. Not only does she lack proper adult care-takers or role models, she also has to cut her childhood short in order to become the primary breadwinner and care-taker for her father. Some versions claim she is merely six to eight years of age when she first starts begging food for both of them. Later, she works for her neighbors doing house chores for them to bring in three meals a day for herself and her father. In the version I have chosen, Cheong mentions that she is over ten years old when she declares to her father that she will now go out and earn a living. From an early age, Cheong is a homemaker, provider, guide for her blind father, and problem solver of her small family.

The ultimate victimization, of course, is Shim Cheong's drowning in Indangsu Sea. After signing up to offer 300 bags of rice to Mongunsa Temple on a whim, Blind Shim regrets his rash actions. When Cheong comes home late that evening, she finds out what he has done. But she replies with a smile, "If you regret, it can't be a sincere devotion. If it is your ardent wish to have eyesight, I'll do all I can to raise 300 bags of rice" (See p. 108). In this reply, we can see the very definition of devotion. Devotion, as Shim Cheong plainly states, is not just the action one takes by giving of material, but also the state of mind and the emotions behind the devotional action. There shouldn't be any regrets, and the action of devotion to a god should be carried out with joy and gladness.

Even though Cheong reminds her father what an appropriate attitude should be when offering devotion, she goes through tremendous torment when faced with the reality that to give proper devotion she has to sacrifice her life. First, she lies to her father after

making an arrangement to be sold as the sacrificial offering to the Dragon King in the Indangsu Sea. She tells her father that Lady Jang has paid 300 bags of rice to the Mongunsa Temple in exchange for her becoming an adopted daughter. Blind Shim thinks it a wonderful idea even though they have to be separated. Understanding how important it is to have an appropriate attitude, Cheong still agonizes at the thought of dying at such a young age and parting with her helpless father.

Before she leaves, she prepares extra clothes for her father that he can wear with the change of seasons. Then she prepares a special breakfast on the day of departure. Blind Shim, enjoying the special menu on the breakfast table, shares a dream he had the night before, interpreting that Cheong riding in a big carriage must be an indication of elevation to a higher status. She agrees that it is a good dream, cleans the breakfast table, and goes to the altar in the backyard and prays. In her prayer, she calls herself “disobedient daughter” indicating it is not just filial piety that motivated her to be sold (See p. 112). Cheong’s concern continues to be her father and her not being able to carry on her responsibilities as a daughter and granddaughter to her ancestors. She has sold herself to pay for the offering her father has made, but still she calls herself a “disobedient daughter.” There is an implication that her decision to be sold as a sacrificial offering is not purely to carry out her duty as a filial daughter. If it were, she would not have called herself a disobedient daughter.

Finally she breaks down when she is carried to the ship dragging her skirt, with bloody tears soaking her collar (See p. 116) As she walks down to the ship, (paralleling Jesus’ own walk to the execution grounds) Cheong sheds bloody tears, just as Jesus

sweated blood in the garden of Gethsemane the night he was betrayed. When she passes her neighborhood friends, she expresses her anguish as she compares her faith with other girls in the village who lead ordinary lives even in an affluent situation (See p. 116).

ChulHyun Jung points out the fact that Cheong clearly distinguishes between “I” and “you”, “I” being singular and “you” being in plural form. He writes,

She was raised by the warm protection of the neighbors, but from the beginning she and the blind father were alone. Even though the neighbors nursed her, gave her warm rice, Cheong realizes the important life principle that one has to carry on one's own destiny. It must be the truth she has grasped while begging for daily foods. ... She also refuses Lady Jang's offer to pay 300 bags of rice in her place. These scenes show Shim Cheong's indomitable will to be responsible for her own destiny.¹³

The sailors set forth and are eventually caught up in a raging storm. As the sea roars, Cheong hesitates before she jumps into the stormy sea and thinks twice about the fall. At this moment she reprimands herself, for she thinks that the reason she hesitates is because her love for her father is not strong enough. Jung describes:

The reason Shim Cheong's death touches us deeply is because, even at the moment of death, she doesn't give up her humanity. She is gripped with fear faced with death, but her inner strength enables her to recompose herself and throw herself to the depth of the sea. She is very human, and, at the same time, transcends our human mediocrity.¹⁴

Jung notes that even though Shim Cheong herself earlier mentions in her conversations with her father several examples of filial daughters and sons recorded in history, she is not bound by hierarchical filial duty, nor is she compelled by the conceptual ideology expressed in filial responsibility in Confucianism. Shim Cheong's actions, expressed in

¹³ ChulHyun Jung., 313. Translation mine.

¹⁴ Ibid., 332. Translation mine.

begging, supporting, and dying for her father, come not from a sense of filial duty, but rather from a humanistic love toward the blind father who has raised her, enduring adversity, shame, suffering, even risking death. Despite its economic collapse, his is a family of scholars and nobility. As discussed above, it is a great shame for a scholar to go out to beg in strict Confucius practice, but he does so in order to provide food for his infant daughter. Moreover his blind condition presents lots of dangerous situations. Blind Shim's fall into the stream is one very concrete example that he has risked danger and even death while he acted on his concern for Cheong's welfare. Incompetent and reckless he may be, but Blind Shim's love for his daughter is the great strength of his life, and it will eventually lead to his healing and redemption. At this point in our story, it is that love between daughter and father that motivates Cheong's actions.

As we have read above, when gripped with fear of death, she questions whether it is due to her lack of her love toward her father. Her question is not whether she is a dutiful daughter or not, her question, again, is whether her love for her father is strong enough. Filial duty is an ideology forced by the patriarchal system, while love is an affection that touches and grabs the human heart. We may be obligated to follow the head, but we can never underestimate the power of the heart. What, then, is the source of her sacrifice?

Theological Interpretation of Sacrifice in the Story of Shim Cheong

Cheong's decision to sacrifice herself to gain her father's sight is not a surprise. Various sources record stories of sacrifices motivated by filial piety.¹⁵ As I have

¹⁵ There are various monuments erected in memory of filial daughters, sons, daughters-in-law, and sons-in-law in different parts of the country. There are also stories of ancient figures who gave parts of

mentioned in the Introduction, there is a problem with the gender-specific role of the sacrificial victim in Korean literature. This fact often legitimizes and perpetuates domestic and intimate violence. Moreover, the male perpetrators of intimate violence do not have reasons to feel remorse, since the sacrifice of a female member of the family is expected by tradition, practiced in the culture, and encouraged by role models in literature.

In Chapter 3, I thoroughly examined the danger of interpreting traditional theology of sacrifice, especially for women who have been victimized. Hyun Kyung Chung (a Korean woman theologian) in her book, Struggle to be the Sun Again, recognizes the danger of making meaning out of suffering and sacrifice. She emphasizes that the sacrifice of Jesus can be used as both a seed for liberation and an opiate for the oppression of Asian women.¹⁶ When one doesn't have proper understanding of the abusive system and false message of institutionalized religion, one takes in readily what the voice in power insists.

Cheong's drowning in InDangSu sea is not a sacrifice for us to emulate. Instead, it is an act of murder motivated by greedy religious leaders,¹⁷ enforced by an incompetent father, and justified by unjust social practices that affirm the sacrifice of certain groups so that others may have a more comfortable and affluent life. By calling her a filial

their body or even sacrificed themselves or their own children to meet the needs of their parents. Filial piety is emphasized a lot in Korean history.

¹⁶ Hyun Kyun Chung. Struggle to Be the Sun Again: Introducing Asian Women's Theology (New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 54.

¹⁷ I will discuss greedy religious leaders further in a later section.

daughter and honoring her death as a virtue all daughters should imitate, Korean society perpetuates female sacrifice. It is a dangerous message not only to the victims (who are told that their suffering is right and just), but also to potential perpetrators (who are told that the suffering of others is an acceptable way to receive benefits.) Most of all, it is a blow to the ideals of human dignity and equal human rights.

Why, then, is Shim Cheong rewarded for her sacrifice? The answer is simple. God does not encourage nor endorse human sacrifice, but God can transform even the most brutal human actions into something meaningful and bring healing to the crushed victims of sacrifice. Each step of healing through gracious compensation from God brings the victim a step closer to wholeness. When she falls into the InDangSu sea, Shim Cheong is freed from all her responsibilities and receives a new life. All of her pain and suffering - not just selling herself for 300 bags of rice or drowning in the sea, but also a deprived childhood and merciless poverty -- is compensated by the grace of Heaven through the agent of the Dragon King.

The first phase of healing happens when Cheong meets her mother in the underwater world. Mrs. Gwak has become Lady Okjin after her own death, and is living in heaven. The Lord of Heaven orders the Dragon King to arrange the meeting between the mother and the daughter. For a few days, Lady Okjin is brought from heaven to the underwater world to meet her daughter, whom she held in her arms for only seven days before her own death. And Cheong finally has a chance to be a child again for a while, and is consoled by a loving adult who is willing and able to give affectionate care (see pp. 126-

27). Shim Cheong, whose childhood was cut short by the cruel circumstances of her life, finally finds an opportunity to become a child once more by the grace of God.

Shim Cheong's Individuation

In chapter 2, I have discussed the process of individuation, which can be summarized as the process of becoming a "person of wholeness, breadth of vision and spiritual awareness."¹⁸ To review, John Sanford spells out three basic experiences one goes through in the process of individuation¹⁹: "suffering, the recognition of a power greater than our own will at work in our lives, and coming to care for someone other than ourselves."²⁰ I also mentioned that these criteria may not fit perfectly when applied to women.

It seems that Cheong, like many girls and women, possesses a natural instinct about caring for others. She always pays attention to the needs of others before her own. Her father's basic needs and safety are counted as supreme importance. When she is around ten, she tells her father how concerned she is to have her father go out to beg for food and volunteers to do the begging of food herself. At first, Blind Shim is reluctant, but Cheong convinces him and he changes his mind and exclaims what a dutiful daughter she is, but he tells her it would not make him comfortable to send the little one out on the street to beg. She is insistent, and her father finally gives in (see pp. 106-07).

¹⁸ Sanford, Man Who Wrestled with God, 10.

¹⁹ See chapter 2 under "Individuation."

²⁰ Sanford, Man Who Wrestled with God, 26.

Filial piety, in Asian countries, had been lifted up to a point where any means were praised when the results could be interpreted as an action expressed in respect for the parents. Selling a daughter's body is not a big deal in a society where killing one's own son is considered a great expression of filial piety, and the names of those who have demonstrated such actions were, as we have seen above, highly respected and remembered in history.

From an early age, Cheong shows a keen awareness of spiritual power. She knows that when she is faced with a challenge bigger than she can solve, she needs to call attention to the deities around her. When she finds out her father has signed up to pay 300 bags of rice as alms to Mongunsa Temple to offer to Buddha, she goes into action and sets up an altar in the backyard so that she may devote herself in fervent prayer (See p. 108-09). It is interesting to note that Cheong doesn't pray for 300 bags of rice. Rather, the focus of her prayer is that her father might receive his sight. Blind Shim has made an arrangement with institutionalized religion (Buddhism) to receive his eyesight, but Cheong has a sense that the solution to his blindness may come from another source.

We can also see evidence of Cheong's connection with the spiritual in the description of the merchant ship's journey. During the voyage, which took several months, Cheong encounters several spirits that died on various sections of the sea and listens to their stories filled with han (regret). One of the spirits told Cheong to be careful on her long journey and return safely. She wonders, "It is queer for her to tell me to return safely!" This is a clue that jumping into the sea is not the end of her life. Cheong also wonders, "Isn't it odd that I could see and hear the souls of those who have been dead for

thousands of years! It must be the sign of my approaching death.” (see pp. 121-22). What she is not aware of is her gift of a highly developed spiritual sense. Throughout the story, Cheong consistently exhibits attentiveness and respect for the spiritual realm.

It seems Cheong’s life has been filled with suffering from the moment her mother died when she is only seven days old, being raised on begged milk under an incompetent father.²¹ Or maybe it was before then, from the moment when she, as an immortal spirit, was told to go down to earth in exile. However, Shim Cheong doesn’t succumb to her suffering. At an early age, she meets the challenges with spirit and determination and rises above the circumstances. She grows up to be a maiden that shines with high morals, great beauty, and tremendous inner strength.

The ultimate challenge in her journey of individuation is her descent into the depths of the sea. Drowning in the deep sea is a great symbol of meeting the shadow. It is a great journey that descends deeply into the dark side. The process of individuation continues as Cheong faces the Dragon King under the roaring sea, meets the mother who has been absent in her life, integrates with her animus in the person of Emperor, and is reconciled with her repenting father. The unjust society that has oppressed her with poverty and powerlessness, that tried to kill her spirit as well as her body, finally transforms into a royal banquet where all the wounded persons of the world (in the form of blindness) experience healing. (These will be discussed in detail below.) The point I am trying to make is that this story is rife with symbolism representing individual and communal

²¹ The incompetent father was discussed in detail above where I have pointed out that blindness is not the only component that made him incompetent.

shadows, and we can see the process of individuation happening in the lives of the major and minor characters in the story.

Shim Cheong's Integration

I have mentioned earlier Cheong's encounter with her dead mother in the underwater palace, which started the process of healing. Meanwhile, on earth, proper rituals are given in memory of Cheong. Before Cheong leaves Dowha village with the sailors to be the sacrificial offering, Lady Jang invited her to her home and made a portrait of Cheong so that she may continue looking at her for the rest of her life. One day, as Lady Jung stares at Cheong's portrait, she notices that the picture has turned dark, and that water droplets have started to form on the painting's surface. Lady Jang realizes that Cheong must have drowned. Soon after, the portrait returns to its normal colors. Wondering what kind of sign it is, Lady Jang busies herself with the proper rituals to honor Cheong's spirit. She also erects the "Tower of the Grieving Woman" by the sea and holds memorial services twice a month, on the first day of the month and on the full moon. The Dowha village folks also raise a tombstone next to the Tower of the Grieving Woman.

On it is a poem:

In her heart, only for her father's blindness
Sacrifices her body in the water to practice filial duty,
Waves are dark blue and deep for ten thousand li
Even though grasses by the water thrive every year
Her sorrow (han) never wears off

Even though they called it filial duty that drove Cheong to death, instead of rejoicing with it and calling it an accomplishment, they recognize the torment she must have felt and grieve with her upon her death. They call it han that will never wear off, and it is

described that all those passing by the tomb shed tears upon reading Cheong's story.

Then the narrator continues:

How unfair and unjust is this world! Poor and powerless people can't even keep alive the body given by their parents and protect the life given by Heaven. Cheong, the God-sent filial daughter, drowned herself in the Indangso sea, after all. The world she returned to is the heavenly world where God's power is limitless. The people who are blinded by greed and the speechless Buddha couldn't help her, but the water ghosts of Indangsu could no doubt recognize her. (See p. 122)

Throughout history, interpreters have emphasized that Cheong's sacrifice was a noble expression of filial duty, but when one looks at the original narration, we can see that this was a mistaken notion. It is clear that the narrator understands that it was injustice that killed Cheong, not her sense of filial duty. It was the greedy world and the powerless Buddha (made speechless by institutionalized religion) that killed Cheong. She was called a filial daughter because she had done all she could while alive on earth to make her father happy, not because she drowned herself. It was clearly emphasized that our physical body is given by the parents and should be protected from any harm and kept alive in honor of the giver, and the soul, which is a gift of heaven, should be likewise safeguarded. In this unjust world, greedy and powerful people and institutionalized religion oppress the poor and powerless, but in the underwater world, where there are no gluttonous leaders, God recognizes the victims, understands right intentions, and uses its power to bring consolation to the victims of violence.

Around this time, the Lord of Heaven orders the Dragon King to prepare to welcome Cheong when she drops into the sea and to make sure she is comfortable. I have already discussed in detail how Cheong's reunion with her mother gives her a chance to be

compensated for her suffering. However, Cheong cannot stay in the underwater world forever. Several days after her glorious reception, Cheong is sent back to the spot where she was drowned, hidden in the middle of an unusually beautiful lotus flower. And it is nobody else but the merchants who sacrificed Cheong who find the flower. Here is another beautiful event of reconciliation between Shim Cheong and the merchants, although the merchants could not recognize it for what it was at the time. In his willingness of the ship's captain to own up to the act of violence done to Shim Cheong, the captain was given an opportunity to contribute to the event that ultimately brings appeasement (see p. 128).

Elevating Cheong to the position of an empress was an act of compensation performed by Heaven. According to her birth dream, she was a daughter of a Goddess. As a fallen celestial being born in the form of a peasant girl, she cannot return to her former status. However, she reaches the highest status possible as a human being – that of an Empress of the Song Dynasty. The country Cheong was born and grew up in is ChoSun, (the name given to Korea at this time) but the country she came back to in the lotus flower is the Song Dynasty. This is a significant distinction. The Song Dynasty, which ruled China from 960 to AD 1279, was a much bigger empire with more power and greater accomplishments than ChoSun. It was a culture that the Koreans of that time strove to emulate as much as possible. Being the empress of the Song Dynasty is a much higher status than being the queen of ChoSun. From the perspective of ancient Koreans, this means that Shim Cheong's status has risen as high as humanly possible.

The ultimate reparation for the violence done to Cheong comes through the repentance of Blind Shim. Moved by Shim Cheong's plight, the sailors had donated many resources in the form of rice, cloth, and money to Blind Shim, on top of the three hundred bags of rice for the Buddha. With the help of generous neighbors who were willing to provide helping hands to Blind Shim, he can live comfortably for the rest of his life. But he meets a woman called Ppaengdeok's Mama and marries her. She wastes all of his fortune and flirts around town. In his shame, Blind Shim moves away from Dohwa Village. When Shim Cheong becomes the empress, she is unable to locate him.

To find Blind Shim, it is suggested that the Empress hold a banquet for all the blind people in the whole empire. Blind Shim hears of this and decides to attend the royal banquet. On his way to attend the banquet, however, Ppaengdeok Mama steals all his money and runs away with another, younger, blind man. As Blind Shim continues the journey on a hot day in mid-June, he is soaked with sweat – unsurprising considering Korea's hot summers. So he decides to take a dip in the nearby stream. When he comes out of the water, he finds that all his clothes are gone. Someone more desperate than Blind Shim has stolen all his possessions down to his last piece of clothing and shoes. He is stark naked, and there is nothing he can claim as his own (see p. 135).

This is a very significant symbolism that prepares him for an ultimate transformation. Right before he reunites with Cheong, he sheds all the objects associated with the past. He lost his wife, his only child, all his newly gained fortune, and finally he is left with only nakedness. The stage is set for a chance for Blind Shim to be in touch with the

brutal truth about his whole situation. He is now ready to make honest repentance and a truthful confession.

On the last day of the banquet, Empress Shim spots her father sitting in the corner. She asks her lady-in-waiting to call him forward and ask him his name and place of origin. He reveals his identity. This is what he thinks of himself:

“This humble blind man is Shim HakGyu from Dohwa Village, Hwangju. In my twenties, I lost my eyesight, and in my forties, I lost my wife. I raised an infant daughter begging for milk. Her name was Cheong and she was filled with filial devotion. While we barely survived with the food she brought home, I heard that a sacrificial offering of 300 bags of rice to Buddha at Mongunsa Temple would open my eyes. She sold herself to the sailors from NamKyung and drowned at Indangsu sea. My daughter died, but I am still blind. I should have died years ago. However I’d rather die after I tell all my stories to your highness, so I have journeyed 1000 lis to confess to you.” The adversity he had faced in his later years adds to the destitution, and he cries bloody tears. “Oh, my daughter, Cheong!” Blind Shim prostrates himself, beats the ground, and keeps on wailing.²²

At this confession, the blood turns in her eyes and the bones melt in her body, and Shim Cheong calls out, “Oh, poor father! Hurry and open your eyes and look at me!”²³ It is only at this moment, after true repentance and forgiveness has taken place, that Blind Shim opens his eyes.

The chief monk of Mongunsa Temple promised that 300 bags of rice will open his eyes, but Blind Shim doesn’t open his eyes when the rice is delivered. He doesn’t open his eyes when Cheong drowns in the sea. He opens his eyes only after he confesses his sin, admits his wrong, and is ready to face the consequences of his actions. He opens his eyes the very moment his beloved daughter calls him father and asks him to look at her.

²². Ibid., 199. Translation mine.

²³ Ibid.

In that moment, a total healing happens in Blind Shim as well as in Shim Cheong. Finally, both father and daughter experience wholeness and become complete people. Blind Shim is given a title of Buwonkun, an honorary post held by the queen's father, by the emperor, thus restoring the noble status that he lost when he was struck blind long before Shim Cheong's birth. Ppaengdok's Mama, his wicked second wife, is found and punished for her deceitfulness. Blind Shim eventually remarries to a woman who bears him a son to continue the family name. So, like all the best fairy tales, this story ends with integration and individuation, and the characters are now free to spend the rest of their lives "living happily ever after."

Shim Cheong and Jesus Christ

Birth Dream

A birth dream is a dream associated with a specific person and his or her birth. Usually, parents or close relatives with the special gift of dreaming have a birth dream for a child around the time of conception or birth. A common element in birth dreams is the giving and/or receiving of special objects, fruits, or plants or appearance of certain animals that have close encounters (ex: jumping into the arms, or coming into the bed, etc.) with the parents. For a long time, Koreans believed that birth dreams contain very important clues about one's life.

Both Blind Shim and Mrs. Gwak have the same birth dream for Cheong on the same night. The birth dream expounds Shim Cheong's heavenly origins. Before this life, she was a daughter of Seowangmo, the Goddess who ruled the world of fairies and female immortals. This is an indication of gender separation. Female characters, whether they

are fairies or immortals, are understood to be governed by a female leader. The heavenly origin of Cheong suggests an unusual celestial power behind the humble earthly birth. While wondering where to go when she is sent to the human world, she is given directions by three figures, Taesangnogun, Huto the goddess, and Buddha. Taesangnogun is a great master of Taoism in 6 B. C., Huto is the goddess of harvest and earth, and Buddha, of course, was the ascetic and philosopher who founded Buddhism. Two great figures of the major religions of the time and the goddess of the earth all agree that she should be born in the house of Blind Shim. This scene, with its heavenly messenger delivering the news of a divinely blessed conception, is reminiscent of the Annunciation as recorded in chapter 1 of Luke's gospel.

Dreams and visions are means of communication between the divine and human, or the unconscious and conscious, according to Carl Jung. Both Cheong and Jesus have heavenly origins and are conceived by divine power, sent to earth by divine intervention. They both are humbly born to parents who are poor but sincere, show keen awareness of spiritual dimensions, and have great respect for divinity. At Cheong's birth there are no angels singing, no shepherds worshipping, nor Magis visiting bearing royal gifts. Instead, Blind Shim sets up a table of thanksgiving with freshly cooked rice and soup to Samsin, the goddess of birth who oversees conception, gestation, birth, and lactation, and sends a wholehearted prayer to all the gods he can name (see p. 99).

Unusual Gifts and Discernment of Prayer

Shim Cheong's birth is an answer to a fervent prayer, especially by her mother. Mrs. Gwak, after a discussion with her husband, decides that their one objective in life is

“earning” a child from heaven. She sells all her possessions that she has diligently accumulated from hard work and meager wages and gives them as offerings to different Buddhist temples and shrines so that they may gain favor from Heaven. The reward for these sacrificial offerings is, of course, the gaining of a child, not just an ordinary child, but the one sent from Heaven. In the Old Testament, also, Hannah prays fervently for a child promising that she would offer him back to God and for God’s service. The objects of offering are different between the two stories: Mrs. Gwak offers all she has, and Hannah offers the unborn child. Nevertheless, offerings are made as an exchange for a child.

As I have mentioned earlier, at her deathbed, seven days after giving birth to a girl, Mrs. Gwak asks her husband to name their daughter Shim Cheong (See p. 97). Naming is an important ritual filled with blessings and good intentions from the giver of the name, not only in Korean culture but also throughout the world across time. Marjorie Suchocki, a process theologian, calls the receiving of the name as “beginning life with borrowed meaning.” As one receives a name, one’s life also starts shaping around the meaning of the name or the life of the person from whom the name was taken. She writes, “A name, given at the beginning of existence, is full of meaning: that meaning enters into the shape of personal existence.”²⁴ Susan Shaw explains about the importance of naming:

In biblical thought, a name was more than an appellation; it summed up the essence of a person. Telling someone a name was an act of self-disclosure. A refusal to give one’s name implied an unwillingness to give all of oneself, since to have someone’s full name implied a power over or a possession of that person.²⁵

²⁴ Suchocki, 7.

²⁵ Shaw, 79.

The family name, Shim, means “deep water, as in flood”, and her given name, Cheong, means “clarity.” Therefore, her name in full means deep and clear water. In written forms in Chinese characters, both characters include the same element that symbolizes water. The name Shim Cheong presupposes the importance of water in the life of this newborn baby. By giving the name Cheong, her mother includes blessings of a pure and clear life for her daughter.

Her birth dream describes Cheong’s heavenly origins, but this is not the only sign of this child’s extraordinary nature. It is described that she grows up without an ailment, a sign of the grace of Heaven, for she is destined to be a great figure. Her extraordinary talents become more apparent even as early as ten years old²⁶ as she was able to provide for her father’s daily needs and earned enough money to give proper ceremonial services for her mother (see pp. 105-06).

When she is around fifteen years old, Shim Cheong is considered the most beautiful woman in the whole country. She also turns out to possess God-given talents in the literary arts, ethics, etiquette, knowledge, and wisdom. Her reputation spreads far and wide, and the wife of the Prime Minister from the next town (Lady Jang) wants to meet her. At their first meeting, Lady Jang studies Cheong carefully and decides Cheong was a heavenly being that came to live in Dohwa Village in exile on earth. She declares

²⁶ In Korea, one’s age is calculated differently than in the Western world. A newborn baby is already one year old at the moment of birth. And on January 1 of each year, regardless of where the birth date falls, one gains another year. Numbers are often rounded up to make it simple to say. So “around 10” can be anywhere from 7 to 11 years old, around 15 can be anywhere from 13 to 16. Some versions of the story state that Cheong started begging for food when she was around 7 which can be anywhere from 5 to 8.

Chong is “a prodigy, born with the spirit of heaven and earth!” (See p. 104). She expresses her desire to adopt Cheong as a daughter of her own since her husband passed away and their two sons live far away in other towns. This is a significant encounter, since Cheong was born to a family in dire poverty even though Blind Shim carried a long line of scholars in his genealogy. This new encounter elevates her status on earth to nobility and gives Cheong a female role model from high society, while her other encounters have been with common folks in the village. Therefore, this new relationship will prepare Cheong to be chosen as a legitimate empress of the Song dynasty in the future.

Parallel Images from the Story of Shim Cheong and the Bible

Water. Water is a major symbol in this story. Actual water and various symbols related to water are often used to set the stage for transformations. Deep water can be as calm as a mirror on which things around it can be reflected with clarity. It becomes a tool to give a second look at a view or an idea. Water is a life-giving agent that grows plants and quenches thirst for animals and humans. A big body of water in the form of a flood can sweep away a landscape or even take lives. Things are immersed in water to be hidden away. Thus, water is a fitting symbol for bringing forth transformation.

The theme of water and oceans comes up again and again in Christian theology. Even in our story of creation, it is recorded that in the beginning, “a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” (Genesis 1: 2b) and God separated bodies of water. (Genesis 1: 6) Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan before he began his earthly ministry. Jesus called his first disciples who were fishing in the sea, and frequently met

the disciples by the sea, a body of water, not just to teach, but also before and after his death and resurrection to signify a new phase in their relationship and a new beginning of the church. Meetings by the water mark special transitions in the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. The woman Jesus met at the well went through a radical transformation as we read in chapter 4 of John's gospel. Water turns to wine at the wedding of Cana, marking the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. We, as Christians, use water in the sacrament of baptism to symbolize the beginning of a new phase in life. Water can also be found in its role as a transforming agent in the story of Shim Cheong. Shim Cheong and Blind Shim's path to fulfillment truly begins on that night when Blind Shim falls into a stream and nearly drowns. From that point on, they can no longer lead their lives the way they used to. The father and the daughter have to go through a painful separation, and both experience dramatic transformations in life.²⁷

Another form of water, the InDangSu Sea, also becomes a changing agent for Cheong. The moment she jumps into this body of water, she is no longer the poor girl who used to beg for food and do odd jobs for people in the village. She is no longer the pathetic sacrifice who has been sold for 300 bags of rice. She becomes an honorable guest in the underwater palace. Immersed in water, the past pains disappear and future hopes are born. Life changes when water appears in the story. When she comes up to the surface of the InDangSu Sea, she becomes a potential candidate for the empress.

Blind Shim, on his way to the royal banquet, takes a bath in the nearby stream and experiences a life changing transformation as he prepares to open his long-covered

²⁷ Later, I will elaborate this point further under the heading of Transformations.

wounds and face his authentic self. He is ready to truly repent of his sin, be forgiven and reborn into a person with dignity and a new status. By washing away his past life as a selfish, incompetent old man, he is able to face the truth about his own nature honestly, opening up the path for fulfillment.

Transformation. I have already described the transformations Shim Cheong and Blind Shim went through. Another character that undergoes a transformation is the Emperor. He was filled with grief after the death of his first Empress, to the point of neglecting his responsibilities as the ruler of the Empire. When he meets Cheong, he finds renewed energy as a man and as an Emperor. Eventually, the generosity and benevolence of the new Empress, Shim Cheong, rubs off her to spread to the Emperor and to the whole country. She asks the Emperor to give a banquet for all the blind people in the country, not only to give her a chance to find her father, but also to proclaim the peaceful reign of the Empire. With Cheong's transformation, all the blind people in the country who were considered the poorest among the disabled in the whole world are elevated to the status of guests at the royal banquet and receive ultimate healing when they open their eyes the moment Blind Shim opens his eyes (see p. 139). Banquets are also familiar scenes in the Bible. Jesus not only used the parables of wedding banquets to describe kingdom, he also invited the least, the lost, and the last to his banquet table on numerous occasions.

The sailors, who are willing to sacrifice a human being for their safe journey and abundant profits, pay Cheong 300 bags of rice and much more. On the day of Cheong's departure from DoHwa Village, she and her father have a heart-wrenching farewell. Looking at the father and daughter wailing, holding one another, one of the sailors

proposes a plan to collect from each sailor “a little something” to provide support for Blind Shim’s future well-being. Pretty soon, they have collected three hundred big coins, 100 bags of high quality rice, and a load of cotton and hemp cloths. The love of Cheong touches even these profiteering businessmen.

Water, as I have pointed out earlier, is often used as an agent of transformation. In the story, there is also the transformation of water itself. The wild, life-consuming body of water of Indangsu Sea, is described as if a fish fighting against a dragon causes the ship to lose its sails, an anchor, an oar and its rudder. After Cheong falls into the water, it quickly calms down. “The haze lying over the sea is filled with flower shaped clouds, the green mountains quiets down in tranquility as if water beasts became regretful” (p. 120). The author’s interpretation of this transformation is that it originated from a change in the heart of the Dragon King who resides and rules in the water.

The calming of the sea reminds us of a similar incident in the gospels. All three synoptic gospel writers record an incident when Jesus, awakened by the fear-stricken disciples in the middle of the storm, rebuked the wind and the raging waves. The storm ceases, and there is calm in the ocean (Matthew 8:18, 23-27, Mark 4: 35-41, and Luke 8: 22-25). The disciples are amazed and say to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey?” (Luke 8:25b). Jesus rebukes the wind and the sea, and they obey. Cheong throws herself into the wind and the sea, and they change their heart and calm down. Here is the noticeable difference between a masculine way and feminine way of calming water: one orders and rebukes, while the other embraces.

The main character that goes through a transformation effected by the power of the devotional act of Cheong is, of course, Blind Shim. As a blind man, Shim Hakyu could not provide for his family. He had to depend on his wife and his young daughter for mere survival. He lost not only his eyesight but also his value and dignity as a person and as a man. The price he must pay to regain his eyesight is the life of his daughter. But in the end he regains his eyesight, and his daughter not only lives, but is elevated to royal status. It is recorded that with the restoration of Blind Shim's eyesight, all the other blind persons in the whole empire also gained their eyesight (see p. 139). In its power and magnitude, Cheong's love for life and for her father is comparable to the power of God's love expressed in Jesus that redeems the whole of humanity. Cheong's love is strong enough to return to life after being drowned, and gives her new life as the Empress. She certainly deserves to be a leader that can rule the whole Empire with this magnificent love. She can and will save the poor, the sick, the captives, the disabled, the lonely, the forgotten, and the marginalized.

Application of the Study of Sacrifice

In the Bible, we read about parents sacrificing their children. In the Old Testament, Abraham takes his son Isaac to sacrifice him as God has commanded (Genesis 22), and Jephthah sacrifices his daughter to keep the promise he made to God in exchange for victory in the war (Judges 11). In the New Testament, it is interpreted that God sacrifices God's son for the salvation of humanity by making him be born as a human being. Theologies of cross describe the death of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice ordained by God.

A more thorough discussion and criticism of this subject have been elaborated in Chapter 3.

It is important to protect victims from further victimization by the church. Yes, Jesus, an innocent man, was murdered for political reasons. Christian theologies, throughout history, have urged us to imitate God's love, especially as that love has been interpreted as sacrificial love. We need to know, however, that "the performance of sacrifice is a ritual in which some human beings bear loss and others are protected from accountability or moral expectations?"²⁸ But we cannot minimize the fact that Jesus was a sacrifice. Therefore, the meaning of sacrifice has to be redefined.

Mary Zimmer reminds us that the original meaning of sacrifice is "an offering to be made sacred by God. In the Old Testament, sacrifice was an act of consecration, not one of self-denial"²⁹ As she describes Hannah's promise to dedicate her unborn child Samuel to God and God's service, Zimmer concludes, "(Hannah) initiates the sacred aspect of sacrifice by making her greatest desire an offering. Her sacrifice is not a ritual one based in the law, but one of a humble heart. And she is empowered by her offering."³⁰ We can use this description to distinguish sacrifice from abusive behavior: When the act of sacrifice diminishes life, we have to name that act as what it is, an abuse. Sacrifice is an offering made sacred by God that ultimately empowers the one who offers.

²⁸ Brock and Parker, 25.

²⁹ Mary Zimmer, Sister Images: Guided Meditations from the Stories of Biblical Women (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 70.

³⁰ Ibid., 71.

Jesus' death on the cross was an expression of human cruelty and an act of self preservation carried out by institutionalized religion. In spite of its brutality and vindictiveness, when this horrific act was offered to God in its total nakedness, God (in God's infinite love and power of life) was able to consecrate it into a life generating, empowering event. When freely offered to God, this sacrifice was made sacred by God, and through this act of sacrifice, Jesus was empowered and reborn through the act of resurrection.

Shim Cheong was killed by an abusive and patriarchal social system, a corrupt religion (Buddhism) that turned deaf ears to the cry of the oppressed people, and human greed and cruelty that was willing to sacrifice another human being for their own safe journey and abundant profit. It was also her father, a man who was made incompetent by an oppressive patriarchal ideology, that killed an innocent girl. Despite the cruelty and injustice we see in her death, it is love that prevails and transforms the world. In Shim Cheong, the love of a daughter toward her father changes the heart of a ruler, redeems humanity, and even controls the water and the sea. In Christian theology, love moves down from heaven in the form of the incarnate Son of God, and spreads to the whole of humanity. In the story of Shim Cheong, love, sent down to the earth in the form of a simple girl in exile, reaches her father, the ruler of the Empire, the whole of humanity, calms the angry forces of nature, and even moves the heart of Heaven itself. Simple and pure love moves the heart of the Lord of Heaven to alter the course of nature. The life, drowning, and rebirth of Shim Cheong should be set side by side with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. One could go so far as to interpret the drowning of Shim

Cheong and her return to the earth as an allegory, transmitted through the spirit of the common folks of Korea many centuries afterwards, for the death and resurrection of Christ, many centuries before the missionaries brought their westernized God to the countries of the Far East.

Hyun Kyung Chung paid special attention to the life giving power in the suffering of Jesus. This is how she interpreted the message of sacrifice:

When Asian women live through the hardship of suffering and obedience their family, society, and culture inflict upon them, they need a language that can define the meaning of their experience. The image of a suffering Jesus enables Asian women to see meaning in their own suffering. Jesus suffered for others as Asian women suffer for their families and other community members. As Jesus' suffering was salvific, Asian women are beginning to view their own suffering as redemptive. They are making meaning out of their suffering through the stories of Jesus' life and death. As Jesus' suffering for others was life-giving, so Asian women's suffering is being viewed as a source of empowerment for themselves and for others whose experience is defined by oppression.³¹

Conclusion

Traditionally, this story has been interpreted as a story of a filial daughter. I have tried to show evidence from the story itself that it was not the act of sacrifice, but simple, pure love that opened the eyes of Blind Shim, calmed the storms, and transformed countless characters throughout the course of the story. When we interpret the power behind these transformations as the power of sacrifice, we fetter and trivialize the magnitude of Shim Cheong's love.

By titling the story as "Shim Cheong; The Filial Daughter" the readers are expected to see expressions of Shim Cheong's love within the limit of the daughter-father

³¹ Chung, 54.

relationship, and the result of her sacrificial love as merely the opening of the eyes of her blind father. I wonder how the interpretation would have changed if the main character was a young man. Perhaps the interpreters would have been less likely to extol the virtues of a son's self-sacrifice, focusing instead on more masculine values such as courage in the face of death, self-determination, and loyalty.

As I have just pointed out, there are many indications of the communal, universal, and celestial effects of Shim Cheong's love, especially in aspects of the story that are often cut out of abridged versions of this story meant for children. I have mentioned the importance of the story being told in its entirety in chapter 1. This is particularly important, because when one considers all of the events of the story in their entirety, one must conclude that in the end, Shim Cheong was not a particularly good example of filial piety at all. If Cheong's main motivation was being a filial daughter, she would not have sacrificed herself, but lived on to give aid to her father until the day of his death. A truly filial daughter would never have sacrificed herself for 300 bags of rice in this manner. A more acceptable course of action would have been to work hard and earn the rice through hard labor and thrift, particularly since in the Asian tradition, a child dying before his or her parents is the worst possible tragedy for the parents. As a saying goes, "A child buries a parent in the mountain, but a parent buries a child in his or her heart." In the act of dying before her father, Shim Cheong committed the worst possible offense to her father according to Confucianist ideals. Filial piety demands that child support and honor the parent. By selling herself to the sailors, she removed that source of support and failed

in her duty. This is why Shim Cheong agonizes over her actions on the day she is to leave with the sailors, calling herself a disobedient daughter.

Thankfully, Cheong's death has other dimensions than mere filial piety. When raised by the power of love, her death touches and transforms many lives including all the blind persons in the whole Empire. There is a very close parallel between Shim Cheong and Jesus in their life, death, and resurrection. "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Child, so that everyone who believes in the Love of God may not perish but may have eternal life." Neither Jesus nor Shim Cheong had any wish to die. However, neither of them ran from their fates. They both faced their unjust deaths with determination, making an offering of themselves to the divine. Thus, these horrible crimes were transformed into acts of overwhelming grace, and the world was healed as a result.

Since humanity is imperfect, often we mistake our own needs as expressions of our love. Often we make mistakes believing we can imitate the radical love of God as expressed on the cross. But can imperfect human beings really understand the perfect love of God? Can imperfect human love be measured by the same measure as God's love? Parker helps us to redefine love:

Love is neither transcendence nor undifferentiated union. Love is the wisdom of life that knows when connection can heal and when separation will make life flourish. Love is the capacity to use the powers of holding on and letting go in the service of life. Love is capable of detachment as well as empathy, differentiation as well as union, hierarchy as well as mutuality. Love is the guardian of powers. Love directs the use of specific powers, in response to particular circumstances, for the sake of creating, sustaining, or healing life. In every situation, love asks, "What will serve life?" This means human love comes from a growing wisdom

about life itself. If one wants to love, it is life that one must seek to fully know. To love is to choose life.³²

Again I repeat the warning that was made clear in the beginning of this chapter. Not many of us are equipped to handle and appropriate in our lives the message of sacrifice as Jesus or Shim Cheong did. It is with great caution that I offer this second interpretation of Cheong's sacrifice. For most of us, especially for those who have been conditioned to sacrifice in a patriarchal society, it is safer to stay with the first interpretation of the story as described in the section of "Shim Cheong, A Victim of Cruel Society" until we reach the completion of our own individuation.

³² Brock and Parker, 198-199.

CHAPTER 6

Retelling the Story of Shim Cheong

A Retreat Plan: A Map for the Process of Individuation

*"The thread of my life pulled;
the story unraveled.
And the ones I had despised and disdained were born in me -
like another life,
yet my life,
its mirror image,
its invisible twin." ¹*

by Rev. Soomee Kim

Theme Scripture:

*"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face.
Now I know only in part;
then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known..."*

(1 Corinthians 13 : 12)

¹ Abrahams and Zweig, xv.

Introduction

The Purpose of the Retreat:

Through various activities, exercises, rituals, the participants will learn the concept of the "Shadow," get acquainted with some of their own shadows, and be led to pay attention to the process of their own "Individuation." The Story of Shim Cheong is the main resource of the retreat, which will be read by a leader in the form of story telling, and other activities and exercises are carefully chosen to help the participants to get in touch with the unconsciousness.

Participants:

The primary target is the Christian Women of all ages who have been exposed to the story of Shim Cheong. It is most likely that these will be Korean or Korean-American women. The retreat can be used with women of other cultures or ethnic backgrounds who may have become familiar with the story or have stories from their own tradition that have similar messages.

Physical Setting & Duration:

A retreat center with a big conference room where all the participants can sit around in a circle in one section, and some more space either in the separate rooms or in another section of the conference room where workshops can be set up. It is more ideal, but not mandatory, if there is a trail or stream where people can take a guided nature walk.

The suggested duration of the retreat is three days (For example, Friday, Saturday, Sunday).

Preparation for the Retreat:

The small group leaders will meet in the early afternoon for preparation: The room setting crews will help the retreat leader arranging the furniture, hanging the pictures, and other physical settings, and small group leaders will go over Lectio Divina with the retreat leader to familiarize themselves with the process. The actual retreat starts in the evening on the first day.

All the participants are encouraged to pray in preparation for the retreat. They are to ask God to open their faculties to receive new insights, which will be the gifts from God.

- They are to bring a hand mirror to use through the retreat.
- They are encouraged to bring a favorite snack to share. The table will be set at one corner of the conference room for the participants to enjoy the snacks and refreshment through the whole retreat.
- Most importantly, they are invited to come with open mind.

Pre Session: Launching Pad

The Purpose of Pre Session: The activities in this session will help the participants to set the boundaries, clarify the expectations among themselves, and restate the purpose of the retreat.

Day One, Evening

- **Bring the mirror to the whole group, and sit around in a circle.**

Share the story behind the mirror each participant has brought. Put the mirrors on the altar (a table or something that marks the spot as a designated space for altar) set up in the middle of the circle they are sitting.

Rationale: A mirror is a symbol of our intention to be reflective during the retreat. In the sharing of the story behind the mirror, the participants begin to tell some part of themselves or their life stories.

- **Share the expectations from the retreat leader and the participants.**

Take time to fully hear the participants express on questions A & B, and make notes if necessary for unusual expectations.

A. *What came to your mind when you first heard the theme of the retreat?*

B. *What do you want to get out of this retreat?*

Then explain what the leader's expectation from the group is.

First read Matthew 13: 31-33:

"He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Then say:

This retreat will be like sowing a mustard seed or putting yeast in the dough. I do not expect there will be a great revelation right away. My hope is that all of you will take something that will be growing inside of you and grow as a tree or leaven a dough. There is an old saying, "Give

me a fish, then I will eat for a day. Show me how to fish, then I will eat for a lifetime." I hope and pray you will all take in your heart one assurance that by the time the retreat is over you have some knowledge of fishing. You just to need to acquire better fishing rods and perfect your skills as you pay attention to the issues raised during this retreat and practice what you have learned.

- **Share the General Rules for the Retreat.**

- a. *Listen with Respect*
- b. *Suspend Judgment*
- c. *Value Differences*
- d. *Respect Confidentiality*
- e. *Honor Silence*

- **Take the Pre-Questionair (Apendix A)**

Give enough time for each participant to finish the pre-test. Collect the answer sheets.

- **Discuss the Story of Shim Cheong as they remember it.**

Some questions and discussion topics are as follows:

1. What form of the story of Shim Cheong have you encountered? Ex: written form short version, the full version, listening in recorded forms (audio tape?) Pansori (Korean traditional opera) Etc.
2. What do you remember about the story? What do you like about the story you remember? What do you not like about the story you remember?
3. Is there a message (messages) behind the story? What is your feeling about the message of the story?

- **The rest of the evening is free as they get acquainted with one another and settle into their cabins and/or share the snacks they brought.**

Session 1: Who Is Shim Cheong?

The Purpose of Session 1: To begin the retreat with a reminder that, as it was in case of Shim Cheong, each one is created in God's image, is precious in God's sight, and is born with special aspirations and blessings of the parents.

Day Two: Morning

Theme Scripture:

*It was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
try to count them--they are more than the sand;
I come to the end--
I am still with you.*

(Psalm 139: 13 – 18, NRSV)

- **Who is Shim Cheong?**

As the participants gather around, the leader reads Sections 1 & 2 of the story aloud.
After listening to the story;

Discuss: Shim Cheong's origin as a heavenly being
 Shim Cheong's birth dream
 The meaning of Shim Cheong's name

In small groups: Share your birth dream if you know
 Share the meaning of your name.
 Some of the suggestions to lead the discussion:

Who gave you your name?
 What blessings are attached to your name?
 What do you think of your name?
 Do you or don't you like your name?
 If you had a choice, would you change your name?

- **Break**
- **In the Beginning...**

Read the scripture: Genesis 2: 7

"then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being."

Then read it again with following editorial.

"then the LORD God formed woman from the dust of the ground, and breathed into her nostrils the breath of life; and the woman became a living being."

Let the image sink in for a while, help them express any comments or ask questions. The editorial is not to change the scripture, but to make it more relevant and personal for the participants.

Then watch the Video: "Creation":

(This is the video done in claymation with the script of "God's Trombones" from The Creation by James Waldon Johnson.)

Discussion after the video:

*What came to your mind as you watched the video?
 Any image that struck you unexpectedly?*

After the discussion give insight to the creation story emphasizing these points:

- a. Human beings are made in God's image.
- b. Unlike other creatures, which were created with a simple command, "Let there be.....", human beings are created with the toils and labor of God who worked the muscles as God formed each individual out of clay.

- c. The purpose of God creating human beings is for God to have a loving companion and for humans to have a full life.

Read the scripture: Psalm 139: 13 - 18:

*It was you who formed my inward parts;
 you knit me together in my mother's womb.
 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
 Wonderful are your works;
 that I know very well.
 My frame was not hidden from you,
 when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
 In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
 when none of them as yet existed.
 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
 How vast is the sum of them!
 I try to count them--they are more than the sand;
 I come to the end--
 I am still with you.*

(Psalm 139: 13 – 18, NRSV)

After a moment of silence, say the following:

"All of us are created in God's image. Everything that is given to us originally is divine. God makes sure each one of us is born with unique qualities and beautiful sides. But somewhere between our birth and now, we have heard many negative remarks that caused a part of us to be hidden away. There are also social expectations that have forced us to hide our thoughts or feelings. It is those aspects of us, originally given by God, but now hidden away, that we want to be in touch with during this retreat. May God help us to encounter the shadow side of ourselves."

Be in quiet meditation and close with the prayer:

Closing Prayer: from Psalm 46: 10

Be still, and know that I am God
 Be still, and know that I am
 Be still, and know

Be still,
Be
Amen

Lunch

Session 2: Shim Cheong's Childhood & Growing Up

The Purpose of the Session 2: Through the reading of Shim Cheong's childhood and discussion of the concept of filial piety, the participants will have a chance to rethink their own childhoods and the messages they have heard growing up. Workshops are set to give opportunities for quiet reflection as their hands are busy with simple activities of creative expression.

Day Two: Afternoon

- **Shim Cheong's Childhood and Growing Up:**

Read sections 3 & 4 of the story and discuss as needed.

Possible topics:

What do you think of Shim Cheong begging for food and working in her early childhood?

How do we define filial piety? What do you think it is?

- **Various workshops are set for the participants to choose and experience the hands-on expressions.**

1. Clay Table:
2. Mirror Etching:
3. Guided Meditation Walk: (depending on the availability of the setting)
4. Drawing and Painting
5. Naps & Other free activities

Rest as time allows and Dinner

Session 3: Shim Cheong's Crisis & Death

The Purpose of Session 3: Through the reading of Shim Cheong's crises in life, the participants are given opportunities to remember their own crises or adversities in life. Louis L. Hays poem is to wrap up the session with a reminder that life as a whole, with pain and suffering included, is beautiful and should be cherished.

Day Two: Evening

- **Shim Cheong's Crisis:**

Read sections 5 & 6:

Discussion topics: Hardships in life

- **Admit and feel the hurt.**

We all face pain in life. Share the poem by Luise L. Hays and help the participants to get in touch with the painful feelings tucked away in the shadow side of themselves.

*In order to be whole you must accept all of yourself.
So let your heart open and make plenty of room in there
for all the parts of yourselves.
The parts you are proud of and the parts that embarrass you.
The parts you reject and the parts you love.
They are all of you.
You are beautiful.
We all are.
When your heart is full of love for yourself,
then you have so much to share with others.
(by Louise L. Hay)²*

- **Shim Cheong's Death:**

Read sections 7 & part of 8 where she drowns and people performed the sacrificial rites.

Bed Time

Session 4: Shim Cheong at the Crystal Palace

The Purpose of Session 4: Set in the background of Shim Cheong's journey into the under water world, the concepts of shadow and individuation are explained. The journey into the under water world can be interpreted as the shadow work. This connection will help the participants to recognize shadows in their own life.

² Used by permission from Hay House, Inc.

Day Three: Morning

- **Shim Cheong's Stay in the Crystal Palace under the Sea:**

Read the rest of section 8

- **"What's in the Shadow?"**

Didactic:

Explain the concept of the Shadow and the process of Individuation using the following resource.

SHADOW AND INDIVIDUATION

Shadow:

There are disturbing elements in our psyche that cause tension on the ego because of their characteristics. Jung names them the shadow, and they are the "hidden, repressed, for the most part, inferior and guilt-laden personality."³ They find expressions such as inferiorities, shameful actions or thoughts, and unacceptable impulses, and it is very difficult to admit that we possess them. Jung specifies that "the shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly."⁴ Because of its thrusting nature, we have a tendency to further repress the shadow side of the unconscious.

Repressing it, however, will not diminish it. It takes its course and is expressed in more destructive manners. One of the ways the shadow expresses itself inappropriately is through projection. One's shadow is projected onto others which can result in paranoia, suspicion, or other destructive behaviors.

Even though the shadow is characterized as the negative side of the personality, it is not at all the source of all evil. Jung asserts, "(the shadow) does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc."⁵ The shadow deserves attention. One needs to become conscious of its existence, recognize its shape and nature, and learn from it. Jung further expresses, "the shadow is a tight

³ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 275.

⁴ Ibid., 9: 284.

⁵ Ibid., 9: 266.

passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. But one must learn to know oneself in order to know who one is.”⁶

The shadow is real and is a living part of the personality. It, therefore, will continue its existence in whatever forms we want to give. Ignoring its existence or giving it another more beautiful facade will not make it go away or change its nature. It is my belief and the purpose of my study to find ways and means to give attention to the shadow and work it to add to the benefit of the whole personality rather than suppressing it to the point of destruction. When the shadow side of the personality is not integrated into the consciousness, one can become neurotic or psychotic. When society does not deal with its shadow side, destructive events can occur. When we begin to integrate the shadow into our conscious sense of self, a process of individuation begins.

Individuation

Because our psyche has two opposite components-- conscious and unconscious -- and they always exist in tension and constant conflicts with one another, the harmonization of the two is the goal of a healthy, wholesome life. This is where the transcendent function takes its role and leads us toward becoming a wholesome individual. This process of development arising out of the conflict between conscious and unconscious is named individuation.

When the conscious and unconscious, ego and Self, have an ongoing relationship, Jung saw that one could then hold together a sense of one's unique individuality as well as one's connection to the larger experience of human existence, enabling one to live in a truly creative, symbolic, and individual way.⁷

In Jung's own words, individuation means “becoming an ‘individual’, and, in so far as ‘individuality’ embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self.”⁸

Individuation ... means a process of psychological development that fulfills the individual qualities given; in other words, it is a process by which a man becomes the definite, unique being he in fact is. In so doing he does not become ‘selfish’ in the ordinary sense of the word, but is merely fulfilling the peculiarity of his nature, and this, as we have said, is vastly different from egotism or individualism.⁹

⁶ Ibid., 9: 21.

⁷ Hopcke, 62.

⁸ Jung “The Structure of the Psyche,” in Portable Jung, 27.

⁹ Jung, “Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious,” in Portable Jung, 122-23.

Individuation, therefore, is the term “to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological ‘individual,’ that is, a separate, indivisible unity or ‘whole.’”¹⁰

Jung made sure to describe individuation as a process, not a condition or an end product. This process, therefore, should not be confused with egotism, individualism, and/or self-alienation. It is freeing oneself from the collective psyche that drives people toward mass psychology and mob mentality. It is moving away from the influence of the negative forces of collective unconscious in the form of archetypes. It is finding the individual traits that are overshadowed by the uniform universality.

It is, in Christian terms, finding the original self, created in the image of God. In my understanding, it parallels what John Wesley means by “sanctification.” They both describe the journey into perfection, the maturation process that leads an individual to become a whole, perfect being. It also embraces harmony and balance, recognizing the shadow side of us, but neither consumed by it, nor affected by it. Wallace Clift describes it clearly:

The goal of the individuation process is to achieve a kind of ‘mid-point’ of the personality, where as Jung said, ‘the center of the total personality no longer coincides with the ego, but with a point midway between the conscious and the unconscious.’ Jung called this center the self. For him, the self was a psychological construct that served to express an unknowable essence that could not be grasped as such or defined, since it transcended human powers of comprehension. It could just as well be called the ‘God within us,’ Jung said.¹¹

The following quotations can be used to clarify any questions the participants might have on shadow:

Most of us who are raised in the Judeo-Christian ethic try to live life in the right way. We believe it is better to be honest, fair, open, and loving, rather than ruthless and cheating. So we strive to fulfill an ideal of honesty, or at least appear to people as a person who cares, and who would not stoop to lying and cheating. But there is always the other one in us, the one who would lie and cheat, who does not care about other, but is selfish and grasping. We may try to live by the Ten Commandments, but we must remember that these commandments would not be necessary if there was not a tendency in all of us to break them; that is, to kill, to cheat, to covet, to steal. This other, darker personality within us we can call the shadow. We all have a shadow personality, a side

¹⁰ Jung, Collected Works, 9: 275.

¹¹ Clift, 22.

of ourselves which contradicts our ego ideal of what we ought to be or want to be.¹²

Shadow is not only what we do, it is also what we do not do; it is not only our ruthlessness, it is our weakness.¹³

We are all born whole and, let us hope, will die whole. But somewhere early on our way, we eat one of the wonderful fruits of the tree of knowledge, things separate into good and evil, and we begin the shadow-making process; we divide our lives. In the cultural process we sort out our God-given characteristics into those that are acceptable to our society and those that have to be put away. This is wonderful and necessary, and there would be no civilized behavior without this sorting out of good and evil. But the refused and unacceptable characteristics do not go away; they only collect in the dark corners of our personality. When they have been hidden long enough, they take on a life of their own - the shadow life. The shadow is that which has not entered adequately into consciousness. It is the despised quarter of our being.¹⁴

- **Encourage the participants to raise any questions and discuss them.**

The kinds of questions they raise will help the retreat leader to determine what their understanding is regarding the process of individuation.

Discussion questions:

- What do you perceive as Shim Cheong's shadows?
- What does Crystal Palace symbolize?

- **Break**

Session 5: Shim Cheong's Rebirth

The Purpose of Session 5: As the story of Shim Cheong's individuation is read, the participants will be given opportunity to consider the needs of their own journey of individuation. The Lectio Divina and guided imagery meditation are exercises to get in touch with the divine power for the resources and sustenance as they embark the journey of individuation.

¹² Sanford, Man Who Wrestled with God, 19.

¹³ Ibid., 20.

¹⁴ Robert A. Johnson. Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche (New York: Harpercollins, 1991), 4 -5.

- **Shim Cheong's Re-birth and Elevation to Empress:**

Read section 9

Discussion: Describe the process of Shim Cheong's Individuation

- **Lectio Divina**

Mark 5: 25 - 34: "The Woman with Hemorrhage"

Break into small groups of 5 or 6, and the small group leaders, who have been given direction and experience as part of pre-session training, lead using the written instructions.

1. Let the group sit in a circle.
2. Read the text for the purpose of hearing a word or passage that touches the heart.
3. Silent pause while each chooses a word or a phrase from the text and quietly takes it in and recites gently.
4. Share the word or phrase each has chosen.
5. Read the text a second time for the purpose of hearing or seeing Christ in the text.
6. Silent pause while each ponders the word that has touched the heart and asks where the word or phrase touches her life at this moment.
7. Share what each has heard or seen.
8. Read the text a third time for the purpose of experiencing Christ calling us forth.
9. Lead the group in guided imagery meditation: (Make sure to take time during the pause. Give the Spirit time to work.)

Find a comfortable, alert posture Close your eyes and take a deep, slow breath. and another and another.

There is a part of you that is dark. It is your shadow..... What does that shadow look like? ... Where is it coming from?..... You have been suffering

from this for some time..... Can you identify its origin?.... Give the shadow a shape..... What does it look like?..... Can you touch it? Does it have a name? Stay with that shadow for a while. What do you feel? Are there any words coming to you? Stay with them for a while.....

You hear a commotion..... Jesus is coming with a crowd..... You approach the crowd, find Jesus, touch him..... What is the reaction of Jesus, of the crowd? Do you recognize any face in the crowd? What do you hear? What is your reaction?

Now slowly come back to the room.

Encourage them to stay with the experience. If anyone volunteers, let them share their experience.

10. Close with the prayer.

Open our spirits to your strength. Infuse us with the power of your love. Accompany us in our journey toward individuation, toward perfection. Help us to embrace our shadows and learn from them. Remind us that the challenges in life are your invitation to grow that we may find our original form as you formed us in your image. Amen.

- **Take a break until lunch time.**

Lunch

Session 6: Climax

The Purpose of Session 6: Through the ritual of renewal of baptism, the participants are reminded of their own identity as children of God and the relationship they have with the divine. Through the difficult journey of individuation, they will not be left alone, but be accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Day Three: Afternoon

- **Blind Shim's Adventures and Renewal:**

Read sections 10 & 11

Discussion: Describe Blind Shim's shadow and Individuation
What is the significance of Blind Shim losing all his clothes while taking a dip in the water?

- **Break**
- **"This Is My Beloved"**
(the Ritual of Renewal of Baptism)

For this part a pitcher of water, a bowl, and a towel need to be set.

Read Matthew 3: 13 - 17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Tell the story of Fayette from "Precious Child of God":

Fayette was an African-American woman living on the streets, struggling with mental illness and lupus. She came to sit on the steps of the church, refusing to come in, just listening from outside. It was hot, we had the door open, and I guess she heard the singing. She kept coming, arriving late and leaving early and for weeks never coming in the door. But eventually she did - come in the door, sit at the table, and even joined our new-member class.

In new-member class we talked about baptism, about what it means to be named by God's grace. I told them baptism was a holy moment, a moment when we could hear God saying: "You are beloved, a precious child of God and beautiful to behold!" Fayette liked that part. No matter what else we were talking about, she would bring us back to baptism. "When I'm baptized, I am?" And we soon learned to respond: "You are beloved, a precious child of God and beautiful to behold." "Oh, yes!" She'd exclaim and we'd go on until she brought it up again.

The day came. The choir was gathered around the pool, singing "Wade in the Water." Fayette went under, came spluttering up out of the icy cold water, drew in a new breath, looked all around and asked: "And now I am?" And we replied:

*"You are beloved, a precious child of God and beautiful to behold."
"Yes!" and she danced all around the fellowship hall.*

Two months later I got a call at 2 a. m. Fayette had been beaten and raped and was at the county hospital. So I went. I could hear her long before I saw her. I wasn't sure what she was saying, but I knew it was Fayette's voice. As I got closer to her room, I saw her pacing back and forth, her hair sticking up everywhere, blood and tears marking her face, bruises already starting, her dress torn and dirty and buttoned all wrong. And she was saying: "I am... " When I got to the door, she saw me, looked straight at me and declared: "I am beloved, a precious child of God and.... " At that moment, she caught sight of her reflection in the mirror, turned back to me and said: "I am beloved, a precious child of God and " Again she looked in the mirror, "And God is still working on me. If you come back tomorrow, I'll be so beautiful I'll take your breath away!"

Have you ever been baptized in the waters of amazing grace, named by God in such a way that in the worst of times you know who you are and the One to whom you belong? ¹⁵

After the story say:

"We may not live on the streets. Most of us are not physically beaten or put in the desperate situation like Fayette. But sometimes we look ourselves in the mirror and see the side of us we don't want to acknowledge, the side of we want to forget, the side of we wish to go away. It is that part of us we need to embrace more. God says we are beloved, precious, and beautiful to behold. But we often forget that.

We need to go back to the Source of Life, our Creator, who has created us in the image of God. Baptism is one ritual in we reclaim our identity as a child of God. Especially in the most challenging times, when we are compromised, we need to go back to that Source of Life and be recharged..... again and again.

- *In the church we have a ritual called, "Renewal of Baptismal Vow." This ritual reminds us that we are, each, a precious child of God. This ritual will help us to remember that moment we have completely trusted God." ¹⁶*

¹⁵ Janet Wolf, "Precious Child of God," Alive Now, Sep/Oct 1996, 25-27. (Used by permission from ALIVE NOW.)

¹⁶ If there are any who are not baptized, encourage them to come forward anyway and refresh their soul. If anyone wishes to be baptized then and there, and the retreat leader is an ordained elder, encourage them to go through the baptismal ritual. There may be some paperwork that needs to be filed at the church later on.

The Ritual of Renewal of Baptismal Vow¹⁷

INTRODUCTION

*Sisters in Christ,
Through the Sacrament of Baptism
we are initiated into Christ's holy Church.
We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation
and given new birth through water and the Spirit.*

All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

*Through the reaffirmation of our faith
we renew the covenant declared at our baptism,
acknowledge what God is doing for us,
and affirm our commitment to Christ's holy Church.*

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

*(For this portion the participants stand up, facing the leader.)
On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you:*

*Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness,
reject the evil powers of this world,
and repent of your sin?*

I do.

*Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression
in whatever forms they present themselves?*

I do.

*Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior,
put your whole trust in his grace,
and promise to serve him as your Lord,*

¹⁷ Revised from "The Baptismal Covenant IV: Congregational Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant," in The United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 111 – 14. (Used by permission from Abingdon Press.)

*in union with the Church which Christ has opened
to people of all ages, nations, and races?*

I do.

*According to the grace given to you,
will you remain faithful members of Christ's holy Church
and serve as Christ's representatives in the world?*

I will.

*Do you believe in the triune God, God the Creator,
Jesus Christ the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter?*

I do.

(Pour the water into the bowl and pray over the water.)

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

Eternal God:

*When nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters
and brought forth light.*

In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water.

After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow.

*When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt,
you led them to freedom through the sea.*

Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised.

In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb.

He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit.

*He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection
and to make disciples of all nations.*

*Pour our your Holy Spirit, and by this gift of water call to our remembrance
the grace declared to us in our baptism.*

*For you have washed away our sins,
and you clothe us with righteousness through our lives,
and dying and rising with Christ we may share in his final victory.*

Amen.

REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH:

Each participant is invited to come forward, wet her hand(s), and touch a part of her body they desire (ex: forehead, head, heart, etc.) while the leader repeats:

"Name, Remember your baptism and know that you are a precious child of God."

Close this portion with singing of a hymn, "Open My Eyes, That I May See"¹⁸

- **Break and Rest until One hour before Dinner**

Session 7: Finale

The Purpose of Session 7: Through the ritual of the Holy Communion, the participants are reminded that they are not alone in the journey of individuation. There is power in the gathering of the faith community and the support one can give to and receive from others as well as the Holy Spirit. Picture walk will help them to see where they are in the journey, and cinquain is an exercise to remind their own identity as a precious child of God. Through the reading of the excerpt from Woman and Nature by Susan Griffin they are reminded they themselves hold the key to open the door that will lead them out of fear. The bed time story is chosen to as a message of assurance that God is there with them in their choices.

Day Three: Late Afternoon

- **Blind Shim's Healing:**

Read section 12

Discussion: The Banquet scene:

- **Holy Communion**

Set up the room for the Holy Communion with the chairs in a big circle. A table in the middle with the communion elements and the mirror each individual brought as the altar decoration. Choose four readers for blessing of the bread.

Begin by singing the hymn, "Because He Lives"¹⁹

¹⁸ The United Methodist Hymnal (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), # 454.

Four readers stand in four corners of the room and read "Blessing the Bread."

Blessing the Bread

1. *In the beginning was God*
2. *In the beginning, the source of all that is*
 3. *In the beginning, God yearning*
 4. *God, moaning*
 1. *God, laboring*
 2. *God, giving birth*
 3. *God, rejoicing*
 4. *And God loved what she had made*
 1. *And God said, "It is good".*
2. *Then God, knowing that all that is good is shared*
 3. *held the earth tenderly in her arms*
 4. *God yearned for relationship*
 1. *God longed to share the good earth*
 2. *And humanity was born in the yearning of God*
 3. *We were born to share the earth*
4. *In the earth was the seed*
 1. *In the earth was the grain*
 2. *In the grain was the harvest*
 3. *In the harvest was the bread*
 4. *In the bread was the power.*
1. *God said, All shall eat of the earth*
 2. *All shall eat of the seed*
 3. *All shall eat of the grain*
 4. *All shall eat of the harvest*
 1. *All shall eat of the bread*
 2. *All shall eat of the power*
3. *God said, You are my people*
 4. *My friends,*
 1. *My lovers,*
 2. *My sisters,*
 3. *And brothers*

¹⁹ Ibid., # 364.

4. *All of you shall eat*
 1. *of the bread*
 2. *And the power*
 3. *All shall eat*

4. *Then God, gathering up her courage in love, said,*
 1. *Let there be bread!*
2. *And God's sisters, her friends and lovers, knelt on the earth*
 3. *planted the seeds*
 4. *prayed for the rain*
 1. *sang for the grain*
 2. *made the harvest*
 3. *cracked the wheat*
 4. *pounded the corn*
 1. *kneaded the dough*
 2. *kindled the fire*
3. *filled the air with the smell of fresh bread*
 4. *And there was bread!*
 1. *And it was good!*

2. *We, the sisters of God, say today*
3. *All shall eat of the bread,*
 4. *And the power*
 1. *We say today,*
 2. *All shall have power*
 3. *And bread.*
 4. *Today we say*
 1. *Let there be bread.*
 2. *And let there be power!*
3. *Let us eat of the bread and the power*
 4. *And all will be filled*
 1. *For the bread is rising!*

2. *By the power of God*
3. *Women are blessed;*
4. *By the women of God*
 1. *The bread is blessed;*
 2. *By the bread of God*
 3. *The power is blessed;*
 4. *By the power of bread,*
 1. *The power of women,*
 2. *The power of God,*
 3. *The people are blessed.*

1,2,3,4 . The earth is blessed.

All: And the bread is rising!

(Carter Heyward)²⁰

The bread is shared as each tears out two pieces, keeps one for herself, and gives the one sitting on her right the second piece. So when the bread goes around the complete circle, each has two pieces. Each has taken one from the common loaf, received one from a sister, and given one to a sister. Then they share the cup as they dip both pieces in the juice and take both elements together. It will take some effort to chew two pieces. This symbolizes we have to help one another, help to carry other's burdens, and share our burdens with another sister, thus encouraging them to share each other's pain as they pursue the journey toward individuation.

Dinner Banquet

Day Three: Evening

- **Picture Walk:**

The participants come into the room where the pictures of people in various expressions and states are laid out on the floor. They walk around the pictures single file taking a good look at each picture. At the second round, they choose a picture that particularly "calls out" and stands by the picture. When everyone has been chosen by a picture, the walk stops. They pick up the picture, pair up, and discuss the following questions. If two people are chosen by the same picture, they make up the pair. Let each share the question before moving to the next.

1. What about the picture grasped you?
2. Which part of you is reflected in the picture?
3. What would you like to add or subtract from the picture, and why?

After the individual discussions, come back to the whole group and share the experience.

- **Cinquain:**

²⁰ Carter Heyward, "Blessing the Bread," 79-80 in Ecumenical Decade 1988 – 1998: Churches in Solidarity with Women: Prayers & Poems, Songs and Stories. (Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches Publications), 1988. (Used by permission from WCC Publications.)

Cinquain (sin-can) is a poetry form that comes from France. It has a special style that it is named for. The name of the word - Cinquain- refers to the French word for the number five. There are five lines in the poem. A cinquain is usually done with these guidelines:

Line 1	Title (a noun: one word)
Line 2	Describes the title (two words)
Line 3	Action words or phrase about title (three words)
Line 4	Describes a feeling about the title (four words)
Line 5	Refers to the title (one word)

Compose a cinquain using your name as the title.

After a while, let those who are willing share what they have written.

Close with a prayer.

Closing Prayer: from Psalm 46: 10

*Be still, and know that I am God
Be still, and know that I am
Be still, and know
Be still,
Be

Amen*

- **Break**

The leader reads the following:

*"Woman and Nature"*²¹

The old woman who was wicked in her honesty asked questions of her mirror. When she was small she asked, "Why am I afraid of the dark? Why do I feel I will be devoured?" And her mirror answered, "Because you have reason to fear. You are small and you might be devoured. Because you are nothing but a shadow, a wisp, a see, and you might be lost in the dark." And so she became large. To large for devouring. From that tiny seed of a self a mighty form grew and now it was she who cast shadows. But after a while she came to the mirror

²¹ Susan Griffin, excerpt from "Woman and Nature," in Cries of the Spirit, ed. Marilyn Sewell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 23.

again and asked, "Why am I afraid of my bigness?" And the mirror answered, "Because you are big. There is no disputing who you are. And it is not easy for you to hide." And so she began to stop hiding. She announced her presence. She even took joy in it. But still, when she looked in her mirror she saw herself as frightened, and she asked the mirror why. "Because," the mirror said, "no one else sees what you see, no one else can tell you if what you see is true." So after that she decided to believe her own eyes. Once when she felt herself growing older, she said to the mirror, "Why am I afraid of birthdays?" "Because," the mirror said, "there is something you have always wanted to do which you have been afraid of doing and you know time is running out." And she ran from the mirror as quickly as she could because she knew in that moment she was not afraid and she wanted to seize the time. Over time, she and her mirror became friends, and the mirror would weep for her in compassion when her fears were real. Finally, her reflection asked her, "What do you still fear?" And the old woman answered, "I still fear death. I still fear change." And her mirror agreed. "Yes, they are frightening. Death is a closed door," the mirror flourished, "and change is a door hanging open."

"Yes, but fear is a key," laughed the wicked old woman, "and we still have our fears." She smiled.

Then say:

You all hold the key to open a closed door. Look into the mirror often and talk to your shadow. Embrace the shadow and start loving your shadow. Even your fear can become a key.

- **Take the Post-Questionnaire (Appendix B):**

Give enough time for each participant to finish the post-Questionnaire. Collect the answer sheets.

Discuss in small groups what they have found out in the last two and a half days of the retreat:

Do you have the same feelings or ideas about the story of Shim Cheong?
 How did the story of Shim Cheong help us to know more about ourselves?
 More about God?
 What did you gain from the retreat?
 What would you hold as the seeds that will grow in you?

- **Close the retreat as they share hugs and kisses.**

- **Bed Time Story**

Gather the whole group on the floor, let them bring their pillows if they want to, and read the children's story book, The Soft Secret Word²² as a bed time story.

Testing the Retreat

The Project

I was unable to recruit enough people (Christians preferably) who knew the story of Shim Cheong since their childhood who were able to take the time out for a three-day retreat. Therefore a mini-retreat was done with 14 Korean and Korean-American women enrolled at Claremont School of Theology or Claremont Graduate School in the fall semester of 2004. The main purpose of the project was retelling the old Korean folktale, The Story of Shim Cheong, in its entirety. A secondary purpose was to evaluate the participants' preconceived notions about the story, and how these ideas changed throughout the course of our study.

There were several reasons why this group was my first choice. First, as Koreans and Korean-Americans, they have either heard the story in the past or have already formulated ideas about the story. I wanted to collect data on when and in what form they were exposed to the story for the first time, and what they remember or know about the story or the message of the story. A pre-questionnaire (Appendix A) was given to collect this data. Second, current students at CST and CGU already have some theological education, which would make it easier to explain the basic concepts behind Narrative

²² Jane Aylott, The Soft Secret Word (Succasunna, N.J.: Winged Peoples Press, 1993).

Theology. Finally, I chose a group of all women since women are more open to or have more exposure to feminist thoughts than men.²³

There were 14 persons present at the beginning of the retreat who took the pre-questionnaire, and four of the fourteen did not turn in the post-questionnaire. The post-questionnaire included questions regarding new learning and new insights about the story.

From the beginning, I attempted to keep the atmosphere relatively informal, to encourage feedback and questions. We started with a meal and a time to get to know each other. Refreshments and snacks were available throughout the session. The main body of the project consisted of an informal presentation based on the material in Chapters 4 and 5. This presentation included a lecture, reading the story out loud, conversations and dialogues, both in question and answer format and informal dialogue. We used both English and Korean for the presentation, and exclusively Korean when the story is read. I want to emphasize that even the lecture part was not a formal presentation in the strict sense because I wanted to convey the mood that they could interrupt me any time if they had a comment or question.

The fourteen women who had participated in the project were in their late twenties and early thirties, 10 to 20 years younger than myself. It is interesting to note that while I first read the story in my fifth grade class (11 or 12 years old), the pre-questionnaire

²³ I know the theology of most Korean and Korean-American laypersons would resist the idea of comparing Jesus Christ with Shim Cheong, or any other human being for that matter. I was also concerned that this resistance might contest any further exploration of my theory. The post-questionnaire showed that one person responded comparing Shim Cheong to Jesus is a blasphemy. On a more positive note, however, she did not leave the session, but participated throughout the whole presentation.

revealed that 12 out of 14 of them had heard the story before they entered elementary school at the age of 6 or 7. Two of them first heard the story as young as 3 or 4 years old. Only three of them first heard the story at school or read it in a textbook. The rest of them first encountered the story at home, usually in the form of an illustrated storybook, sometimes accompanied by an audiocassette or record. One person heard it from her older sister.

All of them remembered this story as the tale of a faithful filial daughter whose act of sacrifice led to good things for everyone around her. The good things they listed included: her father receiving his eyesight, Cheong marrying a nice husband, and the happy ending for both her father and Cheong. One participant stated that the story was a burden to her. She felt that she could never live up to Shim Cheong's example and kill herself for her father's sake. The illustrations in the children's storybooks also created lasting impressions in many participants. One person particularly remembered an image of Cheong jumping into the sea with her skirt covering her face, which conveyed the fear Cheong must have felt at that moment.

Most of the responses revealed that they have shared or would share the story with others and repeat what they have been told about the story -- that it is a lesson in filial duty. One person was very clear that she didn't want her daughter to be exposed to this story because she felt it encouraged women and girls to sacrifice themselves while men reap the benefits of the sacrifice. One person used the story as an illustration in a sermon and associated Cheong's return to the world to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. None of

them had read the story in its full, unabridged version: in all cases, these women were only exposed to the abridged children's version of this story.

The post-questionnaire revealed that all of them gained these points of the story as new knowledge:

1. Cheong had a heavenly origin and was born after an unusual birth dream.
2. She was named by her mother Mrs. Gwak, not her father Blind Shim.
3. Not just Blind Shim, but all the blind people in the empire, including the unborn blind and animals, received their eyesight.

All but one expressed that comparing Shim Cheong and Jesus Christ was a new idea for them that gave Koreans a new perspective on our folktales. One person said that it is blasphemy to compare Shim Cheong and Jesus. This same person also thought that the feminist view of not encouraging women to willingly sacrifice themselves is a selfish and narcissistic idea. She believed that through sacrifice, women can contribute to the betterment of all. One person suggested comparing the dream stories in the story with dreams in the Bible. Several mentioned that comparing symbols and images between the story of Shim Cheong and the Bible was an intriguing idea.

Evaluation of the Project

Both pre and post questionnaires confirmed what I had assumed:

1. All the women at the seminar had been exposed to the Story of Shim Cheong at some point in their lives.
2. Most had not read the story in its unabridged form.

3. The story had been introduced to the reader with the ready-made theme of the filial daughter and an encouragement to learn from her example.
4. Those who read the story in its abridged form either didn't know that a fuller version existed or were not encouraged to read it.
5. Most readers either felt the pressure to sacrifice, or learned that sacrifice is a noble behavior that we should strive to achieve.

One thing that alarmed me was how young these women were when they were first exposed to the story. All were introduced to this story at an early age, and all were told that it was right and proper for children to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their parents. Also introducing and encouraging the idea of self-sacrifice from a record or audiotape without the chance for questions and answers seems a dangerous practice for impressionable children.

As for the woman who insisted that comparing Shim Cheong to Jesus was blasphemous and wanted to maintain the traditional interpretation of the story, I feel that this is her right as the listener. To force my interpretation on her, even if it is more liberating than the traditional patriarchal interpretations, would make me no better than any other storytellers who try to force their own interpretations on their listeners. I understand that many artists and historians felt that the restoration of the Sistene Chapel ruined much of their beauty and consider the restored version of the frescoes too gaudy for such a revered place of worship.²⁴ This is their right as well. On the other hand, modern viewers of the Sistene Chapel can compare the restored version with photographs

²⁴ The restoration of Sistene Chapel was discussed during the conclusion of Chapter 1.

of the original frescoes and decide for themselves what they prefer. I am satisfied that I could introduce this woman to an alternative interpretation of the story of Shim Cheong, so that it will be available to her, should she change her mind in the future.

I felt I rushed through the mini-retreat because I had a lot of points to cover and we had only a half day to do it. The participants couldn't find time to be away for two or three days, and I couldn't afford the expense. In this mini version of the retreat, I focused on the reading of the story of Shim Cheong and skipped all the other parts to save time for discussion. We also didn't have time to break the participants in smaller group discussions. Even though it was not a very big group, I am concerned that some introverts may have decided not to speak up during the discussion. Also I wish we'd had more time to let the story sink in after reading it together. One way I could have remedied the situation was to have the participants read the story in its entirety before they came to the retreat. The disadvantage to this alternative, however, would have been an inconsistency in the way the various readers read this story. For the purposes of this workshop, it was vital that all participants became familiar with the full, unabridged version of the story without any preconceived assumptions. The best way to do this was to read the story together as a group.

For further study, I would like to explore the story in its Pansori form (a type of ancient Korean opera) and have a trained Pansori soloist interpret to us the emotions behind the laments and celebrations of the characters. Also, a longer retreat with some time for community building in the beginning can bring many opportunities for the participants to share their experiences and honest thoughts related to the themes of

shadow, individuation, sacrifice, etc. A one-day mini retreat does not offer enough chance for the participants to feel comfortable giving voice to hidden pains and injuries.

Rebecca Ann Parker interprets the miraculous gift of tongues described in chapter 2 of the Book of Acts as a grace of listening and speaking. The true gift of tongues does not consist of some “hidden language of God.” Instead, it can be the simple act of giving voice to the victims of violence and the gift to listen to their pains with empathy. I agree wholeheartedly with Parker in her affirmation. “There is a quality of listening that is possible among a circle of human beings, who by their attentiveness to one another create a space in which each person is able to give voice to the truth of her life.”²⁵ She is clear about the need to break the silence. “Violence is assisted by silence. To stop violence, silences have to be broken... Hearing one another into speech gave rise to a new community, a community of life.”²⁶ It is my fervent desire that by reevaluating the stories and theologies of our time in a new, life-affirming manner, we can break free of any unholy bonds of silence caused by an unjust philosophy that lionizes sacrifice and condones abuse.

²⁵ Brock and Parker., 97.

²⁶ Ibid., 108.

APPENDIX A: PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old were you when you first heard or read the story of Shim Cheong?

2. Briefly describe the context of the experience of your first encounter with the story.

3. What do you remember to be the message related to the story of Shim Cheong?
(Use the back of the paper or another paper if you need more space.)

4. Have you ever told the story to others? (Yes No)

5. If yes, to whom did you tell the story? _____

Did you tell the listener anything "about" the story?

6. If no, would you tell the story to others? (Yes No)

To whom? _____

Would you add anything about the story to the listener?

Optional:

Name: _____

Contact information (address, phone, e-mail, etc.):

APPENDIX B: POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are some new details of the story of Shim Cheong you heard today?

2. What did you learn from the presentation?

3. Would you tell the story to others? (Yes No)

If yes, To whom? _____

4. If you would add your interpretations to the story, what would they be?

Optional:

Name: _____

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